







**STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH  
IN INDIA**





# STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH IN INDIA

BY

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To  
My Mother



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## PREFACE

This volume is a collection of papers previously published in periodicals. "The Select Committee in Bengal and its conflict with the Council in 1770" was published in Vol. LV, Parts I and II, of *Bengal Past and Present*. "Nawab Najimuddowla and the English" appeared in the *Calcutta Review* of November, 1936 and "A note on the personal relations of Warren Hastings and Sir Thomas Rumbold, found a place in the November-December, 1931, issue of the same review. The paper under the caption "A peep into the Macartney Papers in the Historical Museum, Satara" was published in the *Calcutta Review* in April, 1932 and has now been incorporated in this volume with some additions. The paper on the "Treaty of Mangalore" is reprinted from the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, No. 3. These papers deal with important topics in the history of the British in India in the eventful period from 1757 to 1784 and the object in bringing out this volume is to make these papers more easily accessible to the student of British Indian history.



The first paper deals with the circumstances under which the Select Committee was first instituted, shows how it was, from time to time, reconstituted and its functions and jurisdiction newly defined, and describes its conflict with the Council over the question of carrying out the ' plan of reformation ' in the dewany revenues of Bengal ordered by the Court of Directors in their despatch of the 30th June, 1769. " Nawab Najimuddowla and the English " describes how, after Mirjafar's death, the nawab of Bengal was shorn of his remaining powers by Spencer's government and reduced to a mere figurehead, how Maharaja Nandakumar sought to obstruct the English in doing so and the arrangement which Clive, on his return to Bengal in 1765, made for the dewany administration of Bengal. This paper shows that months before the English obtained the grant of the dewany from the Emperor of Delhi, they had started taking a hand in the revenue administration of Bengal and that the formal grant by Shah Alam on the 12th August, 1765, only legalised the existing position.

The paper entitled " A note on the personal relations of Warren Hastings and Sir Thomas Rumbold " brings to light a series of letters written by Rumbold to Hastings which constitute a substantial defence of this much

maligned Madras governor.<sup>1</sup> The next paper under the caption "A peep into the Macartney papers in the Historical Museum, Satara" was first published when these manuscripts were at Satara. Since then these manuscripts have been transferred to the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute at Poona. I have, however, thought it unnecessary to change the title and have retained the name of the museum where I worked on the manuscripts. This paper gives an idea of the interesting materials which this very valuable collection contains. These manuscripts belonged to Lord Macartney. It is not known how Dewan Bahadur Parasnis, whose collections were housed in the Satara Museum, acquired them. Private correspondence between prominent Britishers of the period, which is undoubtedly an important source of history, is rare in India. With the help of these manuscripts the reader is introduced right into the atmosphere of British politics in India of the period. We hear of the espionage by Macartney and Hastings on the doings of fellow Europeans, and of agents being employed by a governor of a presidency to intercede on his behalf with the Governor-General. A great deal more information is made available by these papers on the relations between Hastings and Macartney.

Most interesting, however, is the light which these papers throw on the true character of Sir John Macpherson and it is hoped that if a biography of this Scotchman is now written, the manuscripts in this collection should not be ignored.

The paper on the "Treaty of Mangalore" is a vindication of the Madras government against the charge of having concluded the Second Mysore War with unseemly haste and accepted terms disgraceful to the East India Company.

My grateful thanks are due to the Keeper of Records, Imperial Record Department, and to the Keeper of Records of the Bengal Secretariat Record Room for kindly allowing me to consult the records in their custody and take notes; to the Calcutta University for enabling me to go to Satara to consult the manuscripts in the Museum there and for kindly undertaking to publish this work; to the Librarian, Calcutta University Central Library, for securing from the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute photostat copies of some of the manuscripts; to Mr. Shah Kalimur Rahman, M.A., Lecturer in Persian in the Post-graduate Department of the Calcutta University and his pupil, Mr. Sayyid Azmal Ali Meerza, for securing for me a reproduction of the portrait

of Nawab Najimuddowla preserved in the Hazar Dooari Palace at Murshidabad; and to Mr. Nirmalchandra Sinha, M.A., for kindly going through the proofs and preparing the index.

SENATE HOUSE

CALCUTTA

June, 1942

A. P. DASGUPTA







NAWAB NAZIM NAJIM-U-DOWLAH

## **The Select Committee in Bengal and its Conflict with the Council in 1770**

The East India Company had devised an organisation that was suited for a commercial corporation. This organisation was, in the middle of the 18th century, called upon to take part in political affairs, wield armies and administer territories. That the Company's administration in the different Indian presidencies was unsuited to the new task was patent on various occasions, and the problem of its adjustment to the altered conditions was constantly in the minds of the Court of Directors. Particularly in 1756 and in 1757 the Court of Directors were recommending various experimental measures for the administration of the Indian presidencies. It was the fear of an attack from an European power which first frightened the Directors into attempting to re-organise the governments in their settlements in India. The relations between the French and the English in the early months of 1756 were on the breaking point, and later



on in the year began the Seven Years' War. Under these circumstances the Directors decided to institute in Bengal a body smaller than the Council for quicker and more efficient despatch of business. On the 11th February, 1756, the Court of Directors wrote to Bengal, "As the present situation of affairs requires a more than ordinary vigilance to preserve and protect our estate, rights and privileges in Bengal we have thought proper to appoint and do accordingly hereby constitute Roger Drake, Esq., or the president of Fort William for the time being, Lieutenant Col. Stringer Lawrence when in Bengal, Mr. William Watts or the second in Council for the time being, Mr. Charles Manningham and Mr. Richard Becher, to be a Select Committee to transact affairs with the country government and neighbouring powers, also with the French and Dutch and other Europeans and in general to take such measures as shall best conduce to the protection and preservation of the Company's estate, rights and privileges in Bengal, but they are not to disburse any of the Company's treasure or cash without the concurrence of the majority of the Council duly summoned."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Directors to Bengal, 11th Feb., 1756—Letters from Europe to the Select Com., Imperial Record Department, No. 23, page 8.

Two days later, the Secret Committee of the Directors addressed the members of the Select Committee pointing out the danger from the French and directing them "to put the settlement in the best posture of defence you can, that you be constantly vigilant and concert the properest measures for its security . . . . ."<sup>2</sup> On the 25th May, 1756, the Directors communicated to the governor of Fort William the news of the declaration of war against the French and enjoined that the Select Committee must consult the Council as a whole "on all occasions that require it," and the Council was "to have every information laid before them that shall be necessary for their forming such resolutions as shall best conduce to the common good of the Company in this dangerous and critical situation."<sup>3</sup>

On receipt of the news of the expulsion of the English from Calcutta by the nawab of Bengal and their subsequent reconquest of that place, the Directors in their letter dated 11th Nov., 1757,<sup>4</sup> communicated to their

<sup>2</sup> Secret Com. of Directors to Bengal, 13th Feb., 1756. *Idem*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Secret Committee of Directors to Roger Drake, Esq., 25th May, 1756, *Idem*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Public General Letters from Court of Directors Vol. No. 1—J. R. D.

servants in Bengal a fresh scheme for the administration of their presidency of Fort William. "For ordering, governing and managing all the Company's affairs at Fort William" a board consisting of the twelve persons named in the despatch was constituted.<sup>5</sup> Of these the first four, "Mr. Watts, Mr. Manningham, Mr. Becher and Mr. Holwell are to be each of them president of the said Council and governor of and for all the Company's affairs in Bengal for the term of four months, Mr. Watts is to have the first term to commence upon the receipt hereof, upon the expiration of which first term of four months, then Mr. Manningham to be president for the like term and in this manner they are to succeed each other alternately;—On Mr. Manningham's taking the chair Mr. Watts is to take place as second, upon Mr. Becher's taking the chair Mr. Watts takes rank as second, Mr. Manningham as third and so on."<sup>6</sup> The intention of the Directors to subordinate the military officers to the civil was shown by the provision that Major James Kilpatrick was to be fifth in the Council and was never to rise higher.<sup>7</sup> No fresh member was to be added to the Council until its number

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, Para 45.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, Para 46.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, Para 45.

was reduced to less than nine excluding Major Kilpatrick.<sup>8</sup>

This despatch also provided for a Select Committee "to transact affairs with the country government, and other matters which require secrecy." The four gentlemen who were named to be presidents in rotation were to form the Select Committee and also to preside in that committee alternately for four months in the same system of rotation. Major Kilpatrick was to sit in the committee as the fifth member only when military affairs were under consideration.<sup>9</sup> The functions of the Select Committee were to be "the transacting and negotiating matters with the European and Indian powers, so far as secrecy is absolutely necessary and not otherwise, also the concerting the necessary plans and measures for military operations to be laid before the president and Council for their determination and ordering them to be carried into execution, if approved of,....." The Select Committee was to use its discretion as to what matters required secrecy. It was enjoined however that "nothing is to be concealed from the President and Council, but what in its nature and circumstances ought to be really secret, and

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Para 47.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, Paras 49 & 50.

might be prejudicial to the Company if discovered for a time at least, in consequence whatever matters and transactions are not of a secret nature must stand upon your consultations, and be advised to us in your general letter and the rest must be communicated by the Select Committee to our Secret Committee.<sup>10</sup>

The system of appointing governors from among the Council in rotation was however soon abandoned. The Directors in their letter, dated 8th March, 1758, appointed Clive to be sole president and governor of Fort William in case it should suit him to continue in India. Clive was also appointed to be "the chief and constant presiding member" of the Select Committee. In case he desired to return to England or in case of his death, the system of rotation was again to take place.<sup>11</sup> A few days after the despatch of these instructions a meeting of the Court of Proprietors of the East India Company annulled the rotation system and resolved that "each of the Company's principal settlements continue to be as heretofore governed and directed by a president and council." The Select Committee

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Para 52.

<sup>11</sup> Directors to Bengal, 8th March, 1758, *Idem.*, Paras. 4, 5 & 6.

was continued.<sup>12</sup> A letter<sup>\*</sup> from the Court of Directors to Bengal, dated<sup>\*</sup> 11th April, 1758, ordered that the Select Committee was to consist of five persons, *viz.*, Clive, Watts, Kilpatrick, Manningham and Becher. Vacancies to the Committee, were to be filled up by such persons as the President and Select Committee should think fit.<sup>13</sup> This Select Committee functioned till December, 1762. After 28th December, 1762, there are no Select Committee proceedings till 7th May, 1765, when a fresh one was created to assist Clive in his second term of administration. The Select Committee was, as a matter of fact, not abolished formally in 1763 but the Council as a whole absorbed the special powers that belonged to it. This led to confusion, and for the better transaction of business it was decided that, though no separate Committee would be created, the whole Council should transact its business in separate departments,—the secret and the public departments. In the Public Proceedings of 3rd Nov., 1763, we have the following plan proposed by the Secretary “for the better regulating and transacting the business of Council at the Presidency of Fort William.

<sup>12</sup> Directors to Bengal, 23rd March, 1758, *Idem*, Paras 1-6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, Para 3.

First—The business shall be divided into two departments,<sup>14</sup> the one to be termed the public and the other the secret department.

2ndly—In the publick department shall be carried on all affairs relating to shipping, revenues, fortifications, accounts, appointment of servants, etc.

3rdly—In the secret department shall be conducted all military plans and operations, the country correspondence and all transactions with the country government.

4thly—Distinct books of minutes, consultations and letters shall therefore be kept..

” 14

There was to be one Secretary and one Assistant Secretary but separate sub-secretaries and assistants for the two departments.<sup>15</sup>

The Council approved the plan and resolved that the new arrangement was to come into operation from 1st January, 1764.<sup>16</sup>

So important however was the need for bifurcating its proceedings that the Council started consultations in their secret department from the 8th December, 1763.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Public Proceedings No. 22—I. R. D., p. 1311.

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*, p. 1312.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem*, p. 1314.

<sup>17</sup> *Idem*, p. 1453.

It was by the Directors' letter, dated 9th May, 1764, that the Select Committee, instituted by the orders of 11th Nov., 1757, was abolished. The Directors wrote, "Having taken into consideration the powers with which the Select Committee at our several presidencies have been invested we have thought proper entirely to annihilate and abolish them and the said Committee is accordingly upon the receipt of this letter to be laid aside and abolished at our presidency of Fort William. The like orders to go to our other presidencies."<sup>18</sup> This letter also brought to Bengal the news of Lord Clive's fresh appointment as president and governor of Fort William.

A few days later the Directors proceeded to create another Select Committee. In their despatch, dated 1st June, 1764, they informed Bengal that "The intention of the General Court in desiring Lord Clive to go to Bengal was that by his lordship's character and influence peace and tranquility might be the easier restored and established in that subahship, in order therefore to answer these purposes in a manner that we apprehended may prove most effectual we have thought proper to appoint a Committee on this occasion consisting

<sup>18</sup> Directors to Bengal, 9th May, 1764. Bengal Public letters from Court of Directors—I. R. D., No. 7, Para 36.



of his lordship " and Messrs. Sumner, Carnac, Verelst and Sykes, " to whom we hereby do give full powers to pursue whatever means they shall judge most proper to attain those desirable ends.—But, however, in all cases where it can be done conveniently, the Council at large is to be consulted by the said Committee, though the power of determining is to be in that Committee alone. We further direct that as soon as peace and tranquility are restored and re-established in the subahship of Bengal, then the said extraordinary powers are immediately to cease and the said Committee be dissolved."<sup>19</sup> The Committee was to consist of five members, and vacancies were to be filled up by co-option.<sup>20</sup> It was further ordered that "... the said Committee is to be the Committee for defending the settlement in case of being attacked by an enemy, agreeable to the directions and rules laid down in our letter of the 12th May, 1758 . . .".<sup>21</sup>

The appointment of a Select Committee with extraordinary powers to assist Clive was fully justified by events. All the resources

<sup>19</sup> Directors to Bengal, 1st June, 1764—*Idem*, Para 67.

<sup>20</sup> Para 68.

<sup>21</sup> Para 69. Para 20 of the Directors' letter referred to provided for a Committee to constitute the military government of the settlement in case of its being attacked.

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that he could command were required by him to suppress abuses and enforce discipline in the Company's ranks. Needless to say that the Select Committee was viewed with extreme jealousy by the Company's servants. The Directors fully realised the useful purpose served by the Committee and though the immediate object of its institution had been achieved and Clive had left the shores of India, they confirmed the Select Committee, in their letter of 12th January, 1768, but with somewhat reduced powers. They wrote, " We have experienced such great advantage from the establishment of a Select Committee that, although the ends for which it was first instituted are happily obtained by the establishing of peace, tranquility and subordination, yet we find the nature of those important charges which now fall under the management of our servants requires that they should be conducted by a small number, and we therefore confirm the Select Committee, and their department and powers are to be as follows :—

" They are to conduct everything that relates to the country government, either with respect to the Duane or the Company's political interests with the neighbouring powers together with the military operations depending thereon. They are to negotiate with the Soubah and

the country powers, but to conclude no treaty of commerce or alliance without the approbation of the Council at large. They are to superintend the collection of the revenues arising from the Duanee, but without the power of disbursing them, nor do the revenues arising from the company's other possessions fall under this jurisdiction, their general superintending power ceased with the abuses that gave rise to that power with which they were entrusted; and all other branches of the Company's affairs fall under the general department." The Committee was to consist of five persons including the President and the military officer in command. The Directors added, "We have in the foregoing paragraph directed that the military operations shall be conducted under the orders of the Select Committee but the supreme military power is vested in the board at large conformable to the usual practice." <sup>22</sup>

On the 30th June, 1769, the Directors addressed to the Council at Fort William, one of their most famous despatches which was carried to Bengal by a specially chartered ship, the 'Lapwing.' The Directors had realised that it was no longer wise to remain indifferent to the responsibilities which the Diwani had placed

<sup>22</sup> Firminger—Introduction to the Fifth Report, pp. clxiii-clxiv, Cambray's Edn.

on their shoulders, and decided that “ a patient and moderate exertion of the powers invested in us by the grant of the Dewanee ” was necessary. They, therefore, fixed a “ plan of reformation,” which included the establishment of two Committees for the management of the Diwani revenues, one for Bengal and the other for Behar. Vansittart, Scrafton and Forde were appointed Commissioners to come over to India and carry out the orders. The Commissioners were to have special powers. “ You are to understand, ” the Directors wrote, “ that the government of all the settlements is left in its usual course and channel, but the Commissioners have a superintending and controuling power over the whole in like manner as if we the Court of Directors were ourselves present upon the spot ; ..... They will advise with you so far as they judge necessary upon the several matters which they shall be instructed or shall think fit to take under their consideration ; and,.....they will explain more particularly our designs and wishes, which we are persuaded you will adopt upon conviction, without putting them to the necessity of making use of the authority with which they are invested.” <sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Paras 13-38, Firminger—Introduction to Fifth Report, p p. clxix-clxxiv.

In a subsequent despatch the Court of Directors decided that besides carrying out the plan for revenue reform, the Commissioners were to give effect to new rules defining the constitution and functions of the Council and Select Committee. These rules laid down that the Council was to consist of nine members including the governor and the military commander; that with the exception of the Resident at the Durbar and the military commander, all members of the Council were to reside in Calcutta and not hold any other station; and that the governor, the military commander and three senior members of Council were to constitute a Select Committee "with power to make regulations concerning peace and war, and negotiate with the country powers, but not finally to conclude any treaty until the terms and conditions of such treaty shall have been first approved by our Governor and Council". "The Governor singly shall correspond with the country powers" but all such correspondence were to be placed before the Select Committee for their consideration.<sup>24</sup>

The Commissioners embarked on the 'Aurora' in September, 1769, and reached the Cape of Good Hope in December. After

<sup>24</sup> Directors to Bengal, 23rd March, 1770. Paras 179-180, ap. Firminger—Introduction to Fifth Report, pp. clxxiv-clxxv.

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she left the Cape the 'Aurora' was heard of no more. The Company's servants at Fort William however remained in daily expectation of the arrival of the Commissioners, and allowed six months to elapse after the receipt of the despatch of 30th June, 1769, without doing anything to give effect to the orders of the Court. They would not have allowed such a long time to pass had not the orders of the Directors addressed to the Council led to confusion as to whether the Council or the Select Committee was to carry them out in the absence of the Commissioners. At last on 19th June, 1770, the Council proceeded to take the matter into their consideration. On that date we have the following minutes of consultation entered in the proceedings of the Council.

"Some of the members of the Board being of opinion that by the orders of the Hon'ble Court of Directors in their general letters of the 30th June, 1769, per Lapwing it is their intention to have the management of the Dewanne (sic) revenues in future under the direction of the Council; and being desirous in consequence of having it determined how far their authority in the management of the Company's affairs and how far the authority of the Select Committee may extend.

"Agreed that these matters be taken into consideration on Wednesday next, the 27th instant." <sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> I. R. D. Secret Proceedings No. 6, p. 20.

This resolution of the Council led to consternation among the members of the Select Committee who met two days later on the 21st June to enter their protest against it. It was contended that the Council was not competent to discuss the Committee's authority, that the jurisdiction over 'Diwani matters conferred on the Committee by the Directors' letter of 12th January, 1768, had not been taken away by any subsequent order, that, far from the Directors revoking their powers, they had in a recent despatch asked the Select Committee to assist the Commissioners in their deliberations if called upon, and that the Directors had never authorized the Council to take upon themselves the management of the Diwani revenues. The Select Committee resolved :

1. " That the 9th and 10th paragraphs of the General Letter, dated 12th January, 1768 do define the respective departments of the Council and Committee with a precision which needs no elucidation and an accuracy which requires no amendment.

2. " That in no subsequent letters are the powers there delegated revoked abridged or in any respect altered, either directly or indirectly by absolute expression or any the most distant implication.

3. " That if any arguments are drawn in prejudice to the Committee's powers from the stile of the

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company's letter per Lapwing which addressed the Council on the subject of the revenue, such arguments are hasty and inconclusive because it is usual with the Court of Directors to address the Committee through the channel of the board—evidently without intention to weaken or diminish any part of the delegated powers of the Committee by so doing, and leaving to the Council and Committee the task of separating what belongs to each, examples of which (without including variety of others which might be produced) are sufficiently confirmative, *viz.*, in paragraphs 58, 59 and 60 of the General letter, dated 16th March, 1768 the Council are reprehended for acts of the Committee.

“ In paragraph 64 they say, ‘ In our letter to your Select Committee we desired you would,’ etc.

“ In paragraph 108 they express hopes that a reimbursement of the difference of the expenses of the 3rd brigade and the sums stipulated to be paid by the King and Shujadowlah have been obtained.

“ In paragraph 12 of General Letter of 11th May, 1769, ‘ There is another part of your conduct that we disapprove, we mean your application to the King for a blank firman for the Decan.’

4. “ That this has hitherto been the construction of the Council themselves whose constant practice was to transmit to the Committee extracts from their letters of all such matters as they deemed cognisable by the Committee and consequently no new construction can consistently be put on the stile of the Lapwing's letter.

5. “ That the very existence of the Committee is affected by this motion of the Council, since the same mode of implication by which they question our right of superintendence over the revenue may be applied also



to all political transactions over which we have equally an undoubted and constitutional authority.

6. " That the reformation mentioned to be intended in the administration of the revenue in fact respect neither the Committee nor Council but is apparently meant to be put in execution by the Commissioners who were then on their departure from England but that should the Commissioners meet with an accident or the Directors not think fit to explain the instructions which the Commissioners have received, it rests with the Select Committee alone to be the executors of these orders because their powers as stated in the 9th and 10th paragraphs of the General Letter of the 12th January, 1768 are nowhere repealed because in the subsequent letter by the Houghton the Select Committee is ordered to assist the Commissioners with their advice if called on, therefore could not be supposed to be annihilated by the orders of the Lapwing—and restored by the Houghton and also for the reasons assigned in resolution the 2nd.

7. " That it is contrary to every form and rule and precedent to suppose that the Court of Directors had they intended a revision or abridgement of the powers of the Committee would have left their sentiments on so important and delicate a subject to be collected from loose, unconnected hints, interspersed up and down their letter, nor is it for the same reasons proper or regular when orders have been in one place clearly conveyed to strain meanings in support of an attempt to destroy the virtue of such orders.

8. " That this Committee deem themselves to all intents and purposes as legally and constitutionally invested with the powers granted in the 9th and 10th paragraphs of the letter of 12th January, 1768 as they ever

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were and therefore not amenable to the Council for the exercise thereof, nor liable to be deprived thereof by any but the Commissioners when they arrive, or if they do not arrive, the Court of Directors who conferred the said powers.

9. "That from a sense both of honour and duty and from a necessary regard to the good order and prosperity of the Company's affairs.....they will uphold and maintain their authority without diminution notwithstanding any resolutions or proceedings of the board to the contrary." <sup>26</sup>

In accordance with the resolution of the 19th June the Council met on the 27th June. Mr. Cartier, the President, and Mr. Russell, a member of the Select Committee, at the very outset warned the Council not to cross their legitimate jurisdiction and to enter into any discussion of the powers of the Select Committee. <sup>27</sup> The Council however decided by a majority of votes that the subject should be debated, <sup>28</sup> notwithstanding their finding that the Directors' orders of the 12th January, 1768, had not been repealed. The discussion took the form of questions put to the board mainly by Barwell, and answers given by members belonging to the Council and by those

<sup>26</sup> Select Committee Proceedings of 21st June, 1770, pp. 367-377.

<sup>27</sup> Secret Proceedings—I. R. D. No. 6, pp. 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> *Idem*, p. 44.

who were of the Select Committee. Barwell declared that the subject for consideration was not the powers of the Select Committee. He contended that every member of the Council was responsible to the Directors for the execution of their orders. As such they could not very well say that only some among them, *i.e.*, those who constituted the Select Committee, should carry out the orders. As against this, members of the Select Committee argued that a "member of the Council is responsible only for the execution of such orders as the Court of Directors have pointed out to be within his department" and "the board cannot therefore be deemed responsible for what evidently does not relate to them." Nevertheless the majority decided that every member is responsible for the execution of the Court's orders to the President and Council.<sup>29</sup> Barwell's next contention was that it was absurd to suppose that the Directors would give orders to be executed by servants who did not have the power to obey them. In spite of Cartier's reply that there were instances when the Directors had dealt with matters which related to the Committee in their general letters to the Board, the majority resolved

<sup>29</sup> *Idem*, pp. 47-50.

that orders addressed to the President and Council were to be executed by that body, and this would be acting in accordance with what appeared to be the intentions of the Court.<sup>30</sup> Barwell then asked whether the general supervising power of which the Select Committee had been divested by the Court's letter of January, 1768, had not naturally devolved again to the Council. On behalf of the Select Committee Floyer argued that "when the Court of Directors thought it unnecessary to continue to the Select-Committee their general superintending powers, they did not vest the Council with them. Therefore as in the very letter which deprived the Committee of their extra powers an exact line was drawn between the Council and Committee, I am of opinion that a superintending power is vested in each department and that no general one is intended." The majority, however, entered on record their opinion that "as the general supervising power is withdrawn from the Committee, the Council are in consequence vested therewith."<sup>31</sup> The Council also resolved that the Committees of Revenue at Murshidabad and Patna were to be appointed by themselves and to be under

<sup>30</sup> *Idem*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>31</sup> *Idem*, pp. 57-58.

their jurisdiction.<sup>32</sup> Barwell then tried to tie down the Select Committee to the decisions of the Council. He enquired, "whether the minority after the sentiments of the members have been given are bound to act agreeably to the sense of the majority." Floyer contended that the Select Committee were not bound by the decisions of the majority of the Council in matters in which the Committee alone were concerned. The majority voted in favour of Barwell.<sup>33</sup>

In the course of a rather lengthy minute, Reed summed up the case for the Council. All the points raised in the course of the discussions on Barwell's questions were now put together. Reed pointed out that after the Select Committee was deprived of their supervising powers a Secret Department of the Council was formed and it was decided to refer to them from time to time important matters which should come before the Committee. The Select Committee had acted accordingly and had referred to the Secret Department of the Board matters relating to the Dewani revenues. For instance the Committee had referred to the Secret Department the plan for appointing supervisors. "I think," Reed

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Idem*, pp. 61-63.

added, "it was also at the same time determined in the Secret Department of the Council that the correspondence of the Supervisors with the Resident at the Durbar should from time to time be laid before that body that they might make such further alterations and improvements therein as should be judged necessary." This Secret Department had also replied to the Directors on the subject of their orders by the Lapwing, and the Select Committee had at the time approved the Board's action.<sup>34</sup>

The spirit of rancour which grew out of this quarrel between the Select Committee and Council over their respective powers developed to such an extent that the Select Committee would not allow the Council their legitimate right to ratify the actions of the Committee in matters relating to the revenues. Becher, the Resident at Murshidabad, had reported that the controlling powers of the Supervisors over amils and zemindars were likely to impede the collections of the revenues and suggested the postponement of the new system till the current years' revenue was realised.<sup>35</sup> Without reference to the Council the Select Committee

<sup>34</sup> Proceedings of 3rd July, 1770. *Idem*, pp. 64-73.

<sup>35</sup> Becher to Select Committee—18th June, 1770, Select Committee Proceedings of 21st June, 1770—pp. 378-85.

took away the checking powers of most of the Supervisors, continuing the experiment in those districts only where there were experienced men serving as Supervisors. They wrote to Becher,

".....What you recommended being a deviation from the plan first concerted, we thought [it] more consistent and regular that the Council should be informed of the substance of our resolutions before we despatched the letter.

"We should accordingly have made them acquainted with our [ ] tions but an altercation arose between us and the gentlemen of Council founded [on a] motion for taking into consideration and defining the powers of the Council and Committee which engrossed their whole attention.....

"With respect to the subject of your last letter it is of too [ ] importance to delay issuing our directions upon it and if we continue in our first [resolution] of submitting our proceedings previously to the board, we are apprehensive [ ] the present altercation might be productive of still further delays which would [in] the highest degree be detrimental to the collections at this critical season and delicate conjuncture. We have therefore determined to communicate our instructions without longer hesitation." <sup>36</sup>

The majority of the Council now decided to give effect to the orders of the Directors

<sup>36</sup> Select Committee Proceedings of 28th June, 1770, p. 415.

conveyed in their letter of the 30th June, 1769, on the ground that the chance of the arrival of the Commissioners was very little and that the season of collections had so far advanced that unless immediate effect was given to the plan proposed by the Court, its adoption would be delayed for another year and its purpose consequently defeated.<sup>37</sup> The President, Mr. Cartier, argued that the Directors' orders were to be carried into execution by the Commissioners of whose arrival there were still reasonable hopes. Besides the Board had not as yet received a copy of the Court's instructions to the Commissioners without which the intentions of the Directors could not be properly carried out. Moreover, the time was inopportune for fresh innovations in the method of collections. Only recently a change had been brought about by the appointment of Supervisors, and frequent changes were not desirable. There was great distress in the country. The collections had just begun and any new measure would check the work of collection.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the Council appointed the Councils of Revenue at Murshidabad and Patna, stipulated that they should

<sup>37</sup> Proceedings of the 6th July, 1770—Secret Proceedings No. 6—I. R. D. pp. 89-91.

<sup>38</sup> *Idem*, pp. 79-89.



take charge from 1st September, 1770, and drew up instructions for their guidance from the text of the Directors' letter of 30th June, 1769,<sup>39</sup> members of the Select Committee arguing in vain that all instructions to these Councils should be transmitted from the Select Committee.<sup>40</sup> The Council further demonstrated their control over revenue administration by asking the Resident at the Durbar to transmit to them the correspondence that had passed between him and the Supervisors. It was contended that the Board had appointed Supervisors and had communicated the fact to the Resident, and the Board expected from the Resident all information relating to the success of the plan.<sup>41</sup>

The conflict was thus no longer confined to debates in the Council board but had shifted to the sphere of action. The danger of such dissension in the government at the headquarters became clear when the Council contradicted the orders of the Committee issued scarcely a month ago regarding the powers of the Supervisors, and wrote to the Councils of Revenue that since Supervisors should have proper authority to counteract the powers

<sup>39</sup> Proceedings of 13th July, 1770. *Idem*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>40</sup> Proceedings of 17th July, 1770. *Idem*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>41</sup> Proceedings of 24th July, 1770. *Idem*, pp. 107-109.

of those whose interest was to keep them ignorant, " we confirm the controlling powers we gave to our Supervisors ....you are to represent what addition to that authority you think necessary." <sup>42</sup> The withdrawal of the powers of the Supervisors by the Select Committee without reference to the Council was regarded by the latter as an insult to their authority. They, therefore, took the first opportunity of setting aside the orders of the Select Committee without regard to the merits of that decision.

The Directors decided this conflict in their government at Fort William in favour of the Council. In their despatch of the 25th April, 1771, they wrote :—

" .....We entirely disapprove the opposition given by our Select Committee to a measure which was positively ordered by the Court of Directors and for the speedy accomplishment whereof the Lapwing packet was despatched expressly to your presidency. And as so alarming a disunion amongst our servants may be attended with consequences of a very serious nature, we cannot omit the present opportunity of testifying our displeasure against those persons who have opposed the execution of our orders.

" It is therefore, our pleasure, and we do hereby direct that Mr. Becher be dismissed from our Council

<sup>42</sup> Proceedings of 2nd August, 1770, pp. 119-120.

at Bengal, that Mr. Claud Russell and Mr. Charles Floyer be immediately removed from our service in Bengal and that they do return to Madras with all convenient despatch, where they are to take rank in the stations they would now have held in the Company's service respectively, in case they had remained until this time without interruption on the Fort St. George establishment.

" . . . . . We cannot pass over his [Mr. Cartier's] late conduct in joining a resolution to retard the execution of our orders, which, if they had been vigorously enforced, would, we cannot doubt, have tended much to the public welfare, and reflected honour on every individual who might have had the execution of them. We therefore direct that Mr. Cartier do continue in the government of our presidency of Fort William till the departure of the last ship of the season for Europe after the arrival of Mr. Hastings in Bengal, on or before which time it is our pleasure that Mr. Cartier do resign the the government to Mr. Hastings. " <sup>43</sup>

So much were the Directors pleased with the members of the Council that as late as November, 1772—nearly a year and a half after these orders—they proceeded to shower favours on those who had distinguished themselves in their opposition to the Select Committee. The wise orders of March, 1770, prohibiting members of the Board from residing outside Calcutta and acting as chiefs of subordinate factories were withdrawn, and Barwell

<sup>43</sup> Firminger—*op. cit.*, pp. cci-ccii.

who carried on a lucrative private trade, was offered the chiefship of Dacca, and Reed and Lane the chiefships of subordinate factories that might first fall vacant after the receipt of their letter on ground of "proper obedience" to the orders per Lapwing.<sup>44</sup>

The orders of the Directors were unjustly harsh on the members of the Select Committee. However serious and regrettable were the dissensions among their servants in Bengal, the Directors themselves were responsible. Months before the Council and the Committee quarrelled, Verelst had written, "You are no stranger to a want of method which reigns here in the affairs of this government. The whole weight of business is confined to two departments—the Committee and the Council. . . .neither of these departments are thoroughly defined or understood. . . . The Court of Directors themselves are at a loss where the precise line of each is drawn; sometimes attributing to the Council what belongs to the Committee, and again transferring from one to the other, without rule or distinction."<sup>45</sup> It is clear from the study of the proceedings that the Select Committee never intended to defy the Directors. The execution of the

<sup>44</sup> Firminger—*op. cit.*, pp. ccii-cciii.

<sup>45</sup> Firminger—*op. cit.*, p. cciii.

orders of the Court were retarded by the attitude of both the Council and the Select Committee, and both bodies might have been warned for failing to act in unison. Besides, the orders per Lapwing ought to have been addressed to the Select Committee. The Directors failed to indicate who were to carry them out and sought to cover their error by severe punishments on Becher, Floyer, Russell and Cartier. The Diwani functions belonged to the Select Committee, and the members of the Committee were right in insisting that it was for them to carry out the orders, in the absence of the Commissioners, with the approval of the Council. The Select Committee were regarded with jealousy since the days of Clive. The Committee were now in a weak position. Their general superintending powers had been taken away. Cartier, the President, was a man without personality. Of him it has been said that "there never was a governor less capable, less active, less resolute". It was now, therefore, time for the Council to spring upon the Committee and take away their powers. More so because Floyer and Russell were objects of jealousy, as they had been brought from Madras by Clive in 1765 to supersede Bengal civilians. Their position was somewhat similar to Vansittart's in 1760. Vansittart had also

been brought from Madras by Clive and had in supersession of the claims of Holwell and Amyatt, been appointed President. As a result there had grown up a strong party of opposition against him which found its first grievance in the fact that the Select Committee had without consulting the Council installed Mir Kasim in place of Mir Jafar. Vansittart had thus been faced with persistent opposition to all his acts until his enemies were able to overthrow Mir Kasim and set up Mir Jafar.<sup>46</sup>

It was unfortunate that in that terrible year of the worst famine known to history the real government in Bengal should be so much affected by internal discord. In March, 1773, we find Hastings observing that "the want of clear and distinct lines to mark the different parts of which the government of Bengal is composed is the greatest of the many defects which clog this establishment", pointing out that "the powers of the Select Committee are confined to so narrow a compass that in effect they are next to nothing, and only serve to embarrass and multiply business", pleading "the necessity of distinguishing the powers of the Council, the Select Committee, and the governor, and of substituting to the nominal

<sup>46</sup> Gleig—*Memoirs of the life of Warren Hastings*, Vol. I, p. 291. Mill—*History of British India*, 1826, Edn., Vol. III, p. 274.

authority of the latter, such a degree of actual control as may enable him, to support with credit the character of the ostensible head of government, to give vigour to its decrees, and preserve them from inconsistencies", <sup>47</sup> and submitting his own plan of government. The famous Act which was passed that year, however, paid no heed to Hastings' proposals. The governor general did not have the degree of actual control which Hastings contemplated. The Select Committee was done away with in Bengal, the size of the Council was reduced and the entire administration was placed under the governor general and council, all political matters being henceforward dealt with by the board in its secret department.

<sup>47</sup> Gleig—*op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 289-92.

## **Nawab Najimuddowla and the English**

The dealings of the English with Nawab Najimuddowla in 1765 are of great importance in the story of the evolution of British administration in Bengal. These transactions constitute an important and well-defined stage in the "long process of exhausting the functions" of the subahdar of Bengal by which the English made themselves the rulers of this country, and are in fact of greater importance than the formal acquisition of the dewani of Bengal, Behar and Orissa from the titular emperor of Delhi.

Though the battle of Plassey was not a great military achievement, it had fundamentally altered the position of the English in Bengal. Indeed, the English were, after Plassey, theoretically no more than the zemindars of the 24-parganas choosing to hold the lands by grant from the nawab. Yet in fact they had become masters of the destinies of Bengal. They possessed the most powerful military force in the province, had successfully taken the side of a faction, overthrown one nawab and established another in his place. The English had in treaties with Sirajuddowla



obtained the right of fortifying/ Calcutta and establishing a mint. Sirajudowla had also accepted their claim to trade free of duty.<sup>1</sup> The new Nawab Mir Jafar made similar concessions in 1757, but went further to yield a substantial part of his sovereignty when he agreed that "I will not erect any new fortifications below the Hugli near the river Ganges" <sup>2</sup> and when in a sanad declaring that the English Company were exempted from duties on their goods carried up and down the country he proclaimed that "whoever acts contrary to these orders, the English have full power to punish them." <sup>3</sup>

The English after some time dropped Mir Jafar, set up Mir Kasim, then deposed Mir Kasim and again set up Mir Jafar. In the meanwhile they acquired the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong for defraying the expenses of their troops. These districts were granted, in the words of Mir Kasim's sanad, "to the English Company, in part of disbursement of their expenses, and the monthly maintenance of five hundred European horse, two thousand European foot, and eight thousand

<sup>1</sup> Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, etc.*, Calcutta, 1909, Vol. I, pp. 181-2.

<sup>2</sup> Art. 11, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 187.

sepoys which are to be entertained for the protection of the royal dominions." These troops were to be maintained because "divers wicked people have traitorously stretched forth their hands to plunder the subjects and waste the royal domains." The zemindars, kanungos and talukdars were to pay "quietly and contentedly" "to the persons appointed by the English Company the stated revenues, and implicitly submit in all things to their authority."<sup>4</sup> Thus the English first started their direct administration in these ceded districts, "the first nursery of English administrators for Bengal."

Mir Jafar in his anxiety to get back the 'musnud' not only confirmed Mir Kasim's grant of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong, exempted the trade of the East India Company's servants from all imposts and promised to pay huge sums to the English, but in stipulating also to maintain 12,000 horse and 12,000 foot in the three provinces agreed that these troops could in emergency be increased only with the assent of the governor and council of Fort William.<sup>5</sup>

This miserable creature died a miserable death on the 5th February, 1765. It is not for

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 216-17.

<sup>5</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219..

us to enquire into the respective claims of Mir Jafar's son Najimuddowla and Meeran's child, neither shall we enquire into the motives that led the council to decide in favour of Najimuddowla. Suffice it to say that the English, with their experience of Mir Kasim fresh in their minds and suspicious about the councillors who might get round the new nawab and influence him to act inimically against them, now decided to establish their control definitely over the government at Murshidabad. They were no longer satisfied with being king-makers and enjoying trade privileges. They must interfere in the government of the country.

On the 14th February the council at Fort William resolved that "considering the minority of Najim-o-dowla and his entire ignorance in the affairs of the government.. . .the whole charge shall not rest upon him, nor upon Nundcomar, in whom he has already expressed an inclination of reposing his entire confidence. Since then the whole trust is too great to be placed in one man and that from former circumstances in Nundcomar's conduct we have much reason to distrust him " there was to be appointed at the board's recommendation a "naib subah" or deputy subahdar who was to have, immediately under

the nawab, the chief management of all affairs. The man of their choice was, the naib of Dacca, Muhammad Reza Khan who, it was decided, "shall not be removed without our acquiescence." The board further resolved that "the business of the collections of the revenues shall be divided into two or more branches as may appear proper and the appointment or dismissal of the mudsidies of those branches and the allotment of their several districts shall be with our approbation, and that we shall be at liberty to point out to the nawab and object when improper persons are employed under them. If it shall appear advisable to place this business in the hands of Nund-comar and Roydullub, their power as near as possible shall be equal." The new nawab was to "be discharged from maintaining any troops but what are immediately requisite for the dignity of his person and the business of his collections throughout the provinces." Further no application for 'sanads' was to be made by the nawab except through the English.<sup>6</sup>

In accordance with these resolutions the president, Mr. Spencer, wrote to Muhammad Reza Khan asking him to start for Murshida-

<sup>6</sup> Secret Proceedings of 14th February, 1765, Imperial Record Department, Serial No. 3, pp. 100-106.

bad. Four councillors were deputed to Murshidabad to instal the nawab formally and get him to sign a treaty in accordance with the resolutions of the board.

Najimuddowla did not, however, like the terms of the treaty that was presented to him by the councillors, especially because he was suspicious of Muhammad Reza Khan. The councillors signed the treaty on the 20th February, but the signature of the nawab is dated the 25th February.<sup>7</sup> It seems that they presented to the nawab a ready-made document to which he was compelled to affix his signature.<sup>8</sup> As soon as he got scent of the English plans the nawab had despatched a 'perwanah' to Muhammad Reza Khan expressly forbidding him to stir out of Dacca.<sup>9</sup> The councillors, however, induced the nawab to send another 'perwanah' ordering Reza Khan to hasten to Murshidabad, and, in their anxiety to counteract the influence of the court officials on the nawab, decided to defer the ceremony of public installation till the arrival of the new naib subahdar.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Aitchison, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

<sup>8</sup> Najimuddowla to Clive and Select Committee—Select Com. Proc. of 1 June, 1765, I. R. D. Serial No. 10, pp. 25-26.

<sup>9</sup> Members of deputation to Board, 25 Feb., 1765, Secret Proc. of 28 Feb., 1765, I. R. D. Serial No. 3, pp. 163-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

It is interesting to note the kind of protest that was raised within the council against these measures. Mr. George Gray entered a lengthy minute in course of which he pointed out that the nawab was left "only the name without any part of the power. For without having consulted his opinions or his inclinations it is dictated to him that Muhammad Reza Khan a servant of his father at present a naib of Dacca must be the naib subah, and that in a manner which will throw the entire administration into his hands." This and other articles of the treaty, Gray considered to be "the greatest mortification we can offer to a prince our ally and not our slave." He said that Mir Jafar had a very great dislike for Muhammad Reza Khan and the latter would now have the opportunity of retaliating upon the new nawab for the injuries which, he supposed, he had received from his father. "Besides," Gray aptly pointed out, "Mahomed Reza Cawn is by no means of a sufficient rank to hold a post which commands such distinguished mutseddies as the royroyan and the nizamat dewan, two officers holding precedence of every man in the country except the nabob and his own family." The business of Nandakumar as the royroyan was "to collect the general revenues of the country from the

different naibs, foudars, etc.," and that of Rai Durlabh as the nizamat, diwan was to "collect the rents of the nazims jagheer and to have charge of disbursements of the subadaree. These two departments of government have their distinct offices and registers, and are independent of one another, they cannot be changed or blended without changing the regulations by which the country hath been heretofore governed." Yet this was precisely what the board was doing. Gray was of opinion that Najimuddowlah was of sufficient age and capacity to manage his own government and remarked "....if we encroach on his authority by taking such a share of the administration we shall make it appear that the company make the grants to themselves and that they oppose the entrance of foreign nations into Bengal. The company and not the nabab will then be considered as the principal and in all disputes they will be accountable for whatever is done in the country and as force is the only argument we can produce in our favour, we tacitly acknowledge the same right in the French, Dutch or any other power whenever they chuse to make use of it".<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Gray's Minute, Secret Proc. of 19 Feb., 1765, *Idem*, pp. 116-22.

To these objections the other members of the board replied that the right of nomination to the 'musnud' of Bengal they had " thrice already assumed " without previous reference to the Court of Directors and without the sanction of the Emperor of Delhi, that no right of succession or nomination could rest with Mir Jafar or his family until the acquiescence and confirmation of the Company had been obtained, and that if they could dictate to the Delhi Emperor the successor to the subahdaree of Bengal, there could be no hesitation in laying a salutary restraint on a young and incapable nawab in whose councils the wily Nandakumar held so high a place. The board pointed out that the plan they had devised was based on checks and balances. Muhammad Reza Khan was brought in as a check against the influence of Nandakumar. The board was not aware of any intimate tie of friendship between Reza Khan and Raja Durlabh. Besides to guard against Reza Khan's usurping more power than Nandakumar now possessed, the board had resolved that the collection of the revenues should be in other hands. The nomination of the chief revenue officers also was not left to Reza Khan but to the nawab with the advice of the governor and council. Again the revenues had been



divided into two or more departments “for hindering too much power to fall into the hands of any one mutsaddy.” The powers of the two mutsuddies were to be equal and since the mutual jealousy of Nandakumar and Raja Durlabh were well-known they would act as constant check on each other.

These members went on to add, “The board do not stipulate to be consulted in the appointment of the amils to be employed in the several districts, but reserve to themselves the privilege of objecting and representing to the nabob should the mutsaddies to serve their own ends throw them into improper hands and in case of such amils oppressing and ruining the country.....with such check we think the nabob must have much greater justice done him in his revenues than any he can expect while left at the disposal of Nundakumar and his creatures or any single man whose interest it is to cheat him and keep him in utter darkness in all those points—neither does it appear to us that the dividing the weighty charge of ye. collections under two or more branches....will be attended with the inconveniences that Mr. Gray mentions : There are at present many distinct cutcherries under the Royroyan as the calsa, the chout, his [khas—?] nuvisy jageer munsubdaran,

the sair, etc., etc., which might be separated as far as we can judge from his superintendence without occasioning any confusion....the superintendence of the collections of different chucklahs of the country may without the smallest difficulty or ill consequence be thrown under different men.”<sup>12</sup>

It appears that Najimuddowla had agreed to defer the ceremony of public installation, not because of the wishes of the members of the deputation, but because of his desire to be publicly seated on the musnud after the arrival of the ‘perwanah’ from the Emperor of Delhi for which he had in the meanwhile applied. On the morning of the 3rd March, 1765, Maharaja Nandakumar saw the members of the deputation and desired to know whether a tent should be erected outside the city where the nawab might publicly and with due reverence receive the ‘perwanah’. This attempt to preserve the ‘de jure’ position of the nawab was frustrated by a flat refusal, and the nawab was told that such a step would be improper, and he was to receive the government only from the Company. If sanads from the Emperor would ever appear necessary they were to be obtained only through the board’s

<sup>12</sup> Secret Proc. of 20 Feb., 1765—*Idem*, pp. 135-43.

application. The English then hastened to instal the nawab publicly.<sup>13</sup>

As soon as the members of the deputation proceeded to give effect to the treaty they met with opposition from Nandakumar and the revenue officers. They found it difficult to obtain an idea of the state of the collections. Nandakumar, the zemindars and the officers of the cutchery would not make their usual acknowledgments to Reza Khan, and it was found difficult to take away from Nandakumar the authority that he exercised and restrict him to the task of revenue collection alone. The board's representatives reported to Fort William, "Nundakumar has made a very unbecoming struggle in opposition to your orders to restrain the absolute power he had assumed, and if a watchful eye be not kept on his intrigues he will certainly embroil the nawab's affairs and reassume the power you have meant to place on the hands of Mahomed Reza Cawn, as all the people about the nawab's person are absolutely devoted to Nundcumar and enemies to this change....." <sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Members of deputation to Board 3 March, 1765, Sec. Proc. of 6 March, 1765—*Idem*, pp. 173-74.

<sup>14</sup> Same to Same, 7 March, 1765, Sec. Proc. of 16 March, 1765—*Idem*, pp. 179-81.

The English therefore proceeded to remove all the recalcitrant people in the nawab's government and establish their own nominees in the collection of the revenues. Within a short time "some very corroborative proofs of the treacherous correspondence imputed to Nundakumar in April 1764" was found. The board was convinced of the danger of allowing Nandakumar to continue at Murshidabad and ordered that he should be sent to Calcutta. He was accordingly arrested and detained at Motijhil. The nawab remonstrated, saying that he regarded Nandakumar's honour as his own and demanded his release. When Najimuddowla went in person to Motijhil, Nandakumar was released on condition that the nawab would himself put a guard upon him, and promise to send him to Calcutta in case the board insisted on his being taken there, "and in the meantime not to admit him to his councils and to assign the care of his offices to other hands with our advice."<sup>15</sup>

Nandakumar having been thus shackled, the deputies proceeded to suggest to the council the arrangements that were now to be made for the collection of the revenues. Speaking of Behar they said, "We are told the

<sup>15</sup> Same to same, 21 March, 1765, Secret Proc. of 25 March, 1765  
—*Idem*, p. 255.

principal power is in the hands of Derje Narrain and Kittledass (sic) the duans put in by Nundcomar and that the amils from the different districts were put in by the old nabob and Nundcomar when with the army above. If Ektaramat Dowla be continued in the naibut of that soubahship a change in the mutseddies and amils under him (more especially upon the frontiers) seems very requisite to conduct the collections of the approaching season." They proceeded to recommend Raja Gopal Kissen as one who by reason of his previous experience could very well be appointed in that province. They said that agreeably to the desire of the board they had proposed a large allotment of the revenues to Rai Durlabh over and above his post of nizamat dewan, under which there were some particular collections to the amount of about 6 lakhs per annum. They however anticipated strenuous objections on the part of the nawab to Rai Durlabh being given "so considerable a charge." "Upon a supposition that Nundcomar shall not be acquitted of the charge against him we have enquired of the most capable mutsidies who have formerly been employed in the branch of the collections and have proposed an allotment to each which can either be added to or decreased as may be judged proper." The powers and func-

tions that the mutsuddies and the naib subah were to exercise were defined thus : “ These mutsedies will have to keep the accounts and superintend the different collections, but the turning out or putting in the amils or collectors to the districts must we suppose as heretofore rest with the nabob.—The liberty of presenting proper persons but not the choice having been the extent of their power. The getting the revenues to be received or whether to be collected by the amils or paid by the zemindars immediately to the cutchery here resting in the breast of the nabob—and to see those revenues duly enforced, kept up and paid, the office and duty of the superintendents. The naib subah we think should be consulted in adjusting the bundabust and settling the collections that he may be able to make proper representations to the nabob and it appears his business to call on the mutsedies for the statement of any particular district where he suspects deficiencies and in general to superintend the whole that he may be able to give the nabob a thorough insight into the affairs of the government and point out to him any amendment which can be made.” The members of the deputation then proceeded to suggest a few more nominees of their own for appointment in place of objectionable officials. The nawab’s

arizbegy, Musuffar Ally, was to be removed and replaced by Hadji Mundy. Nandakumar's brother who was in charge of the collections of Rajshahi was to be replaced by Ramnarayan Mustafi, because there was a big balance due from him ; and for the same reason, they recommended Jesarat Khan to be appointed in place of Bahadur Hossain Khan, foudar of Purnea.<sup>16</sup>

The board approved of nearly all the suggestions of the deputies. The nawab was to be prevailed on to give up his objections to Rai Durlabh and confirm to him the proposed allotment besides his appointment as nizamat dewan with the particular collections appertaining to that office. As to Bahadur Hossain Khan, the foudar of Purnea, they were of opinion that, since he could be removed at their will, he might continue in his office, and Najimuddowla was to be urged to provide Jesarat Khan elsewhere suitably to his rank.<sup>17</sup>

Having obtained the board's approval, the deputies waited on the nawab. Najimuddowla objected to the new arrangements relating to the collection of the revenues as "improper and unseasonable till the beginning of the

<sup>16</sup> Same to same, 22 March, 1765—*Ibid.*, pp. 260-72.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of Consultation, Secret Proc. of 26 March, 1765, *Idem*, pp. 274-278.

new year ” and said that “ he would settle it himself at Calcutta.” <sup>18</sup> The President therefore found it necessary to back the instructions of the board to the members of the deputation by a letter to Najimuddowla.<sup>19</sup> Thereupon the nawab gave his assent to the proposed changes, but he could not be induced to have Rai Durlabh.<sup>20</sup> Najimuddowla had to write two appealing letters to Calcutta before the board decided not to insist further on the Rajah’s appointment. They hoped however that the nawab “ means to continue him in the place he already enjoys of nizamat dewan if he be content to hold it alone ” and desired the deputies to “ press the nabob to transfer immediately the allotment proposed for him in the hands of other mudseddies in whom he has confidence ; advising him also that if he acquiesces in giving a post to the son of the deceased Raja Bullob....we shall have no objection thereto....” <sup>21</sup>

Having thus regulated, according to their desire, the management of the nawab’s revenues, and having established their control over this

<sup>18</sup> Members of deputation to Board, 29 March, 1765, Sec. Proc. of 1 April, 1765, *Idem*, p. 283.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 283-4.

<sup>20</sup> Same to same, 2 April, 1765, Secret Proc. of 9 April, 1765. *Idem*, p. 301.

<sup>21</sup> Resolution of the Board, 22 April, 1765. *Idem*, pp. 316-18.



important branch of government, the board resolved that "a battalion of sepoy's should be stationed at the city to act under the resident at the durbar and countenance affairs there." <sup>22</sup>

A few days after this, in May, 1765, Clive arrived at Calcutta to commence his famous second administration. Najimuddowla who was chafing under the restraints imposed upon him and the necessity of having to swallow men odious to him like Muhammad Reza Khan, came down to Calcutta in the hope of obtaining relief from Clive. He presented to the governor and select committee a letter complaining of the manner in which the late treaty had been forced on him, of how against his wishes Muhammad Reza Khan was thrust upon him and the way in which Nandakumar was accused and arrested and sent to Calcutta. He accused the naib subah of distributing 20 lakhs of rupees in money and goods out of his treasury "for the better securing his naibship." "Besides," the nawab continued, "there is a balance due from the above mentioned Cawn of about twenty lacks of rupees on account of Dacca, Sylhet, Rosshamabad of which he does not chuse to pay a single cowri..

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

..... He keeps my seal under his own seal and there is nothing to be done with my will or order—titles, employments, kelauts, elephants, horses and jewell are granted and distributed to others as he pleases..... There is a balance due to the sircar from the jilladars of fifteen lacks of rupees, and now new employments are granted to them, and the lands divided into several divisions.”<sup>23</sup>

Thereupon Clive instituted an enquiry into the conduct of the members of the board who had accepted presents from Muhammad Reza Khan in direct contravention of the express orders of the Company. Various degrees of guilt were fixed upon these gentlemen and the whole matter was reported to the Court of Directors for their final judgment.<sup>24</sup>

“Taking into consideration the youth, inexperience and incapacity of the nabob, the necessity of placing the administration in the hands of men capable to support the weight of government and attached to the Company’s interest and likewise the great danger that may arise to the stability of the present establishment from suffering the whole power and absolute management of the three provinces

<sup>23</sup> Najimuddowla to Clive and Select Committee, Sel. Com. Proc.

o 1 June, 1765—I. R. D. Serial No. 10, pp. 23-28.

<sup>24</sup> *Idem*, pp. 32-62.

to rest in a single person," Clive and his select committee resolved that "Mahomed Reza Cawn be advised to relinquish the title of naib subah and also part of the unbounded authority where-with he was vested by the late treaty, as a measure not only agreeable to the nabob but necessary to the safety of the present government and the future tranquility of the country.....they judge it necessary to retrench his authority and ballance his power in order to produce that perfect equilibrium of influence which alone can remove the nabob's jealousies and give permanency to the measures we are taking to prevent the necessity of future revolutions." They further resolved that "Roydullub and Juggut Seet be associated in the administration of the government with Muhammad Reza Cawn....and that each enjoy an equal share of power and authority."<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Reza Khan was to be naib, Maharaja Durlabhram, dewan, and Jagat Set Kusalchand and Maharaja Udaichand were to act as chiefs of trade. The appointment

<sup>25</sup> In justification of the selection of these gentlemen the Court of Directors were reminded that, "Roydullub was a principal agent in effecting the revolution in 1757 in favour of Meir Jaffir since which time he has continued firmly attached to the English—and that Juggut Seet is the son and nephew of the two great men plundered of their effects and cruelly put to death by that tyrant Cossim Ally Cawn on account of their faithful services to the Company."

and the dismissal of the foudjars, amils and other officers of the nizamat and the regulation of the entire business of the revenues were to be in their hands. All matters of difficulty, —where the nawab's government failed to keep law and order or where the three failed to act together amicably,—were to be referred to the governor and council of Fort William who were to take measures that would be found necessary. A member of the council was to reside at Murshidabad, paid suitably to his rank out of the nawab's treasury, and "the accounts of the receipts and expenses for the business of the government, etc., shall be laid before him monthly for his perusal."<sup>26</sup>

After drawing up these new regulations for the future government of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, Lord Clive on the 25th June, 1765, left Calcutta on his journey, first to Murshidabad to confirm these arrangements, and then further up country to conclude a treaty with the Nawab Vizier of Oudh.

Soon after reaching Murshidabad, Clive found that the new arrangements were in danger. Though he had intended that none of the three should interfere with each other's authority, he now found that Reza Khan

<sup>26</sup> Sel. Com. Proc. of 21st June, 1765, *Idem*, pp. 63-80.

yielded in almost everything to Rajah Durlabhram and that the latter seemed to grasp all power and upset the balance. He therefore had Mr. Sykes, a member of the Select Committee, sent from Calcutta to watch affairs at Murshidabad. Sykes was to stay there about a fortnight to keep "the most watchful eye" on Durlabhram and "to check every symptom of his aspiring at a greater share of the administration than we have allotted him", and Mr. Middleton, who had been appointed to reside on behalf of the company at Murshidabad, was assured that the appointment of Sykes was not to his prejudice. Soon Clive discovered that Qaim Beg, a court officer, had uttered some threats against Muhammad Reza Khan and Jagat Set and both had become afraid of working in the ministry, thereby leaving everything to Raja Durlabh. "Whether this conduct proceeds from his own ambition, or whether he is instigated by Nundcomar or whether it be a stroke of policy in the nabob" Clive could not determine. However Qaim Beg was sent down to Calcutta and detained there. On the 9th July Clive was able to report that all concerned had signed the new arrangements, that "our business at the durbar is finished," and that the affairs in the government were being conducted

with "that harmony among the ministers which we wished to be established."<sup>27</sup>

Thus Clive did away with the arrangements made by Spencer's government. As a matter of fact he did not like the halting character of the treaty with Najimuddowla. In a letter dated the 11th July, 1765, he wrote to the Select Committee, "We have often lamented that the gentlemen of council by precipitating the late treaty, had lost the most glorious opportunity that could ever happen of settling matters upon that solid and advantageous footing for the Company which no temporary invasion could endanger. The true and only security for our commerce and territorial possessions in this country, is, in a manner, always to have it in our power to overcome the very nabob we are bound by treaty to support. A maxim contrary to this has of late been too much adopted; and from that fundamental error (as I must call it) has sprung the innumerable evils, or at least deficiencies in our government, which I have now the pleasure to inform you are in a fair way of being perfectly removed." It was in this letter that Clive disclosed that Najimuddowla had agreed

<sup>27</sup> Sel. Com. Proc. of 7th July, 1765 and 10th Aug., 1765—*Idem*, pp. 100-105 and pp. 117-119.

to make over all the revenues to the Company accepting a pension of fifty lakhs of rupees for himself. He wrote, "The nabob upon my representation of the great expense of such an army as will be necessary to support him in his government, the large sums due for restitution, and to the navy together with the annual tribute which he will be under a necessity of paying to the King, hath consented and I have agreed provided it should obtain your approbation, that all the revenues of the country should be appropriated to those purposes, fifty lakhs of rupees per annum for himself excepted. Out of this sum is to be defrayed all his expenses of every nature and denomination." <sup>28</sup>

It was this position which Clive legalised a month later when he obtained from the Emperor of Delhi the sanad for the dewani of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Nothing remained to Najimuddowla but "the name and shadow of authority."

<sup>28</sup> Sel. Com. Proc. of 10 Aug., 1765—*Idem*, p. 121.

## **A Note on the Personal Relations of Warren Hastings and Sir Thomas Rumbold**

Sir Thomas Rumbold was governor of Madras from February, 1778 to April, 1780. Up to October, 1779 his relations with the governor-general and council of Bengal were fairly smooth. But after that date a bitter quarrel arose between his administration and the government of Bengal which had been invested by the Regulating Act with powers of control over the other presidencies in matters of commencing hostilities and concluding treaties. How the Madras government irritated the Nizam by obtaining without his consent from his brother Basalat Jang the circar of Guntur at rent and demanding peremptorily the remission of the tribute due to the subahdar of the Deccan on account of the other circars held by the company, how again they had annoyed Haidar by marching troops to the assistance of Basalat Jang through a portion of Haidar's territory, and how the Bengal government intervened to appease the Nizam, are matters not unknown to the student of



British Indian history. On that occasion, Rumbold and his administration resented strongly the action of Bengal, denied any power in the Supreme Council to interfere, recalled John Hollond, their resident at the court of Haidarabad, though he had been asked to continue there by Bengal, and shifted the responsibility for the hostile attitude of the Nizam and Haidar to the policy pursued by Bengal in central and western India. The extreme bitterness which characterised the relations of the presidencies at this period was revealed in the acrimonious correspondence which followed. In the dispute between the two governments the Court of Directors attributed the annoyance caused to the Nizam and Haidar to the impolitic acts of the Madras government, and decided in favour of the governor-general and council. For these and other acts connected with the internal affairs of Madras, the Directors dismissed Sir Thomas Rumbold from their service (1781). In 1783 a bill of pains and penalties was brought against Sir Thomas Rumbold in the House of Commons. The prosecution was opened in February but abandoned on 2nd June of the same year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dasgupta, A. P.—The Central Authority in British India, Ch. II.

It is clear that this conflict between the two governments was the inevitable result of the insufficient powers combined with huge responsibility which was given to Bengal while the tradition of independence in the subordinate presidencies died hard. In short, the arrangement under the Regulating Act was found to be unworkable in practice. To what extent personal relations between the heads of the administrations affected the working of the Act has to remain somewhat obscure on account of the paucity of materials. With reference to the relations of Warren Hastings with Lord Macartney, in whose time the conflict between Bengal and Madras assumed a more serious proportion than in the days of Rumbold, we have some materials in the Hastings papers in the British Museum, among the collection of documents in the India Office known as the Home Miscellaneous, in Gleig's *Memoirs of the Life of Warren Hastings* and in the Macartney papers now preserved in the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute at Poona. We see there that Lord Macartney was recommended to Hastings by the governor-general's friends in London as a person who would "second your endeavours for the public welfare," that Macartney on arrival at Madras carefully sought to cultivate

the friendship of Hastings, that Hastings submitted to him his own plans for consideration, but then as Macartney freely criticised them, the governor-general practically stopped corresponding with him.<sup>2</sup> Hastings, it is obvious, had become so tired of counteraction in his own council and in other quarters, that he had become incapable of enduring criticism. The last letter that Hastings wrote assuring Macartney of his co-operation and support was dated March, 1782. There is reason to believe that in April, 1782, the governor-general was labouring under the unfounded belief that Macartney was seeking to undermine his position at home. Then came a series of situations, too lengthy to be described here, for which the Regulating Act was responsible and which were considerably aggravated by the mistrust felt by the governor-general towards Macartney. It is possible to detect here that the personal relations of Hastings and Macartney were strained by their having to work under the situation created by the Act, whereas it is also true that the dissensions between the two presidencies were more embittered by the personal hostility which, in spite of the best intentions of Macartney, had unfortunately developed between him and Hastings.

<sup>2</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, Ch. IV.

Can the same be said of the personal relations of Hastings and Rumbold? In this case, however, the paucity of materials is greater, and no conclusion can be reached. I have not been able to come across any document indicating what Hastings at any time thought of Rumbold as a man, neither have I been able to find any letter from Hastings to Rumbold in the vast mass of Hastings papers among the "Additional Manuscripts" in the British Museum. There are however among the same papers in the "Additional MSS.," volume Nos. 29140 to 29143, thirty-three letters from Rumbold to Hastings upon which I venture to make some conjectural remarks.

That, from the outset, Hastings might have been prejudiced to a certain extent against Rumbold will be surmised from the fact that in 1773 Hastings had received letters from his friends in London informing that Rumbold was intriguing with some success to replace him in Bengal.<sup>3</sup> But then had not Rumbold

<sup>3</sup> *Palk to Hastings*—London, 8 February, 1773.

"Rumbold is soliciting to be your successor and has obtained, I hear, the approbation of the committee of correspondence, but they are afraid of proceeding further imagining he may hereafter fall under some censure about the Mahtot and customs upon salt."—Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. No. 29133, fo. 378.

made amends? For we hear from Laurence Sullivan in 1776 that when there was a motion in the Directors to dismiss Hastings, "Harrison behaved well, and so did Becher and Rumbold."<sup>4</sup> At any rate, on arrival in India in February, 1778, as governor of Madras, Rumbold commenced well. He informed the governor-general of his arrival and sent him his compliments, concluding, "I have been too short a time

*Sykes to Hastings*—London, 10 February, 1773.

"I believe the constitution of the Company will be totally altered. . . . Rumbold will, I think, be appointed your successor—as he has been paving the way for it a long time."—*Idem*, ff. 381-2.

*Sykes to Hastings*—London, 3 March, 1773.

"Rumbold is appointed to succeed you at Bengal. The Company's affairs are still before Parliament.

"Rumbold lent St. George a large sum of money when St. George was in distress which has been a means of getting him his object he has ever since he was first disappointed been anxious to return."—*Idem*, fo. 418.

*J. Caillaud to Hastings*—London, 15 March, 1773.

" . . . . .there is one resolution relative to yourself which I am satisfied will not be changed. . . . .to wit your appointment of Governor General in India. . . . ."—*Idem*, fo. 443b.

"In this uncertain state of affairs when I can assure you that the leading men in the direction are quite in the dark as to the intentions of the minister, in this situation they have notwithstanding appointed Mr. Rumbold as second in council and to succeed in the Government of Bengal. This injudicious ill-timed appointment has met with universal disapprobation and most certainly will never take place."—*Idem*, fo. 446.

<sup>4</sup> Sullivan to Hastings, 1 April, 1776, Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. No. 29137, fo. 137.

here to enter into any very particular discussion with you on matters relative to the management of affairs here.....”<sup>5</sup> Hastings appears to have congratulated Rumbold immediately on his arrival.<sup>6</sup> Rumbold replied by describing the state of affairs in south India and promising that “I shall not fail to write you on every occurrence and intelligence I receive and shall be happy to execute any command you may have here.....”<sup>7</sup>

In this letter he made a suggestion for an offensive and defensive treaty with Haidar saying that “.....it strikes me that our mode of assisting the Bombay government in their operations against the Marathas should be thro’ Hydar—this would answer two ends, it would be giving Hydar an instance of our intentions to promote a firm alliance with him, it would break the chain of French politics and evidently be the best way of co-operating with you and Bombay against our general enemy, this I wish to bring forward, but wait your sentiments upon it.”<sup>8</sup> Again Rumbold wrote, “I have received the most pressing

<sup>5</sup> Rumbold to Hastings, Fort St. George, 12 February, 1778  
—*Idem*, No. 29140, fo. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Same to same—23 March, 1778—*Idem*, fo. 219.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, fo. 223(b).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, ff. 221(b), 222.

entreaties from Haidar to enter into some engagements with him....I have only spoke to the vakeel in general terms, not too much to encourage or disappoint his hopes, till I hear from you, which I hourly expect.....I do suppose there never was a more favourable opportunity to become the umpires of Indostan than the present, the disputes amongst the Mahrattas, the declaration in favour of Ragaboy, the wishes of Haidar to join us, the detachment you have ordered to proceed after the rains from Korah, and the assistance which may be given from hence by a junction with Haidar, will all contribute to the execution of one grand and general plan, which allow me to say, I think should not be neglected—Four or five battalions of seapoys might be raised here to supply the place of any sent out of the Carnatic, which being paid by Haidar increases our force without additional expence to the Company.”<sup>9</sup> The expected opinion from Hastings on the subject, it seems, did not arrive. The matter was then pressed officially by the government of Madras to the Supreme Council on the outbreak of war with France in July, 1778. The Supreme Council had simultaneously approved of the idea of a treaty with Haidar

<sup>9</sup> Same to same, 25 April, 1778—*Idem*, ff. 310-1.

which, however, was not concluded because Haidar was willing to form an alliance with the English only on condition of mutual assistance whereas the Bengal government would not enter into any engagement with Haidar that might draw away the Company's troops from the protection of the Carnatic.<sup>10</sup> Early in 1779 English projects against Mahè made the relations with Haidar very difficult. An embassy from Madras to Haidar's court was contemplated, but no person seems to have been actually sent. Bengal duly received official intimation of these proceedings.<sup>11</sup> On the 23rd February, 1779, Rumbold in a private letter to Hastings dwelt on the hostile attitude of Haidar and the danger from him to the Carnatic, and remarked that the circumstances "will require the serious consideration of the Supreme Council, not only to afford us immediate supplies of cash, but to form some plan for assistance to the Carnatic in case of an invasion."<sup>12</sup> A month later Rumbold wrote again on the same topic suggesting that "measures must be taken for a junction of our troops on the Malabar coast from whence

<sup>10</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> Rumbold to Hastings, 23 March, 1779, Brit. Mus. Add. Mss. No. 29143, fo. 101.



he may always be attacked with success.”<sup>13</sup> This view was officially conveyed by the Madras government to Bengal in April, 1779.<sup>14</sup> It seems, however, that the members of the Bengal government never made up their minds on the subject. It must be said to the credit of Rumbold that so far as these subjects were concerned his attitude was throughout correct, because inspite of an apparently strong feeling in regard to the desirability of either treating with Haidar or attacking him effectually, he had waited for the sanction of Bengal.

It is perhaps not wrong to conclude that Rumbold was, up to July, 1779, honestly inclined to act on Hastings' opinions and to co-operate with the Supreme Council for the common well-being. Not long after his arrival he tried to make good on a point on which the previous government of Madras had given offence to the Supreme Council. “On my arrival here from Europe, I found Mr. Whitehill and the Council had given a positive denial to the requisition of troops from hence, and had wrote to the Council General their sentiments on parting with any part of their force from the Carnatic at so critical a juncture, on receipt of your letter I prevailed

<sup>13</sup> Same to same, 26 March, 1779—*Idem*, fo. 159.

<sup>14</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

on them to have a detachment formed ready in case of any further application, but this was done too late for them to proceed to Bombay immediately....I shall however keep everything ready to act on one general plan when advises arrive from your board....." <sup>15</sup> On the 12th March, 1779, Rumbold wrote, ".... whatever plans you may adopt for the publick services shall meet with every assistance that you may require from this presidency." <sup>16</sup> Again, on the 26th March, 1779, he said, ".....whatever plan you may adopt in Bengal, a proper co-operation of the different presidencies must ensure success to it..... acting on one great line, and not by partial views, or to effect particular purposes, the united powers of Indostan would not be able to stand against us." <sup>17</sup> Much was written by him in similar strain during this period.

Up to July 1779, so far as our materials help us, every important subject was broached privately by Rumbold to Hastings, along with official information of them from Madras to Bengal, the governor-general's opinion sought, and co-operation with the Supreme Council

<sup>15</sup> Rumbold to Hastings, 28 April, 1778.—Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. No. 29140, fo. 325(b).

<sup>16</sup> Same to same, 21 March, 1779, *Idem*, 29143, fo. 139(b).

<sup>17</sup> Same to same, 26 March, 1779—*Idem*, fo. 150(b).

promised. When, on the news of war between England and France, hostilities broke out between the representatives of those powers in this part of the world, Rumbold continually supplemented the official despatches by private information to Hastings regarding the activities of the Madras government against the French.<sup>18</sup> Again in December, 1778, Rumbold explained to Hastings the difficulty of obtaining money from the nawab of Arcot and the raja of Tanjore, and said, " We have wrote you a public letter of this date : I mean to the Council General and I wish you would be particular in your reply that during the present situation of affairs we may be justified in taking such measures as we find necessary...." <sup>19</sup> The difficulties created by the nawab of Arcot's debts, the " little politics " of those who surrounded him, and the dispute about Tanjore, often formed subjects of Rumbold's correspondence with Hastings.<sup>20</sup> On the last day of 1778 the Madras government sent to Bengal the copy of a proposed treaty with Basalat Jang. Rumbold backing this by private

<sup>18</sup> Same to same—6 July, 1 August, 28 August, 12 September, 27 September and 18 October, 1778—*Idem*, 29141, ff. 113 & 14, 207-8, 327, 399, 449 and 515 respectively.

<sup>19</sup> Same to same, 5 December, 1778—*Idem*, 29142, fo. 126.

<sup>20</sup> *Idem*, 29140 ff. 219 (b), 220 and 29142, fo. 124 and fo. 295.

explanation to the governor-general wrote, "....your former letters to this government authorised some steps being taken to get possession of it (Guntur), but I am desirous of having your sentiments and approbation of every measure that makes an alteration in our political connections...." <sup>21</sup>

What appears to be a practically one-sided correspondence continued up to July, 1779. From the material before us, it seems that Hastings must have written about half a dozen times in all to Rumbold, the last of which was in June, 1778. Complaints like the following are frequent: "I have wrote you several letters but have not yet been favoured with an answer," <sup>22</sup> and then a spirit of resignation in these lines, "I look upon it in a publick light necessary to give you every the slightest information that comes to my knowledge whether my letters are favoured by being answered or not." <sup>23</sup> It seems that Rumbold's letters remained unanswered and he suddenly followed Hastings' example by practically ceasing to correspond with the governor-general after July, 1779. After that date there are four dry and short letters only, from Rumbold to Hastings,

<sup>21</sup> Same to same, 3 January, 1779—*Idem*, 29142, fo. 296(b).

<sup>22</sup> Same to same, 24 May, 1778—*Idem*, 29140, fo. 444(b).

<sup>23</sup> Same to same, 28 June, 1779—*Idem*, 29143, fo. 419(b).

the first two of which are mere recommendations of certain gentlemen, and the remaining two inform the governor-general of his ill health and medical advice to go home before the next hot weather.<sup>24</sup> During the period of conflict between the presidencies commencing from October, 1779, when Bengal suddenly intervened in the Madras negotiations with the Nizam, there seems to have been no private correspondence between Rumbold and Hastings. Rumbold's letter of the 11th July, 1779, shows his disappointment of the hope that Hastings would confide his plans to him, and was perhaps the last offer of co-operation. "Fazel Beg Cawn . . . always furnished me with intelligence which I have found to be authentic. He has lately wrote to me very fully. I enclose you a translate of his letter. I am unacquainted with what plans you intend to pursue further than the determination to bring about a treaty with the Marathas, but the flight of Raganaut Row to Surat may probably induce your board to form some other resolution and the letter I now send you may furnish hints to improve on. I can only say that if in any part of the business you choose to place a confidence in

<sup>24</sup> *Idem*, 29144, ff. 6, 96, 112 and 153. The date of the last is 12 November, 1779.

me, I will execute it to the best of my judgment and agreeably to your wishes—you will oblige me by answering this letter as soon as possible that I may know what reply to give to Fazel Beg.”<sup>25</sup>

The main lines of Rumbold's policy seem to have been an offensive and defensive alliance with Haidar to win him in the struggle against the Marathas, and effective action against the Nizam whose vacillating policy made him a difficult factor. It has been seen how he expected to receive Hastings' opinion on his suggestions relating to Haidar. Regarding the Nizam also he depended at the outset on Hastings to advise him privately. Thus Rumbold wrote, “The Nizam wants some check, he trifles with us on every occasion, and we are paying him a tribute of six lacs of rupees annually for taking every opportunity to act with our enemies. The Musterphernagar or Guntoor circar which reverts to the Company on the death of Bassaulut Jung endangers all our others....force formed there under Monsieur Lally....we may therefore too late repent that we have not taken the necessary precautions....I intend shortly to state fully this business to your board for their further

<sup>25</sup> Same to same, 11 July, 1779—*Idem*, 29143, ff. 457-8.

sentiments—but I wait impatiently to hear from you on political matters, before I touch on them so publickly, as your long experience and abilities may correct any misinformation I may have received or opinions I may have formed, and at the same time it gives me an opportunity of assuring you how happy I am to communicate with you on every business concerning the publick welfare.... ”<sup>26</sup> Again, “ We have two accounts from Poonah, one, that our troops with Ragaboy were near to that capital,—the other that there are great dissensions amongst the ministerial party, and that the majority are determined not to admit Ragaboy with the English troops,—Nizam Ally is said to have declared in favour of the majority and promised every assistance in his power—should that be the case we could soon make him alter his tone from hence.”<sup>27</sup>

Rumbold's attitude towards the Nizam was undoubtedly insulting. For the development of the awkward situation of 1779-80, however, Hastings' reticence on the subjects referred to him was perhaps as much responsible as Rumbold's undue haste to act vigorously. The vague nature of the wording of the Regulating

<sup>26</sup> Same to same, 25 April, 1778—*Idem*, 29140, fo. 311.

<sup>27</sup> Same to same, 5 May, 1778—*Idem*, fo. 353.

Act led Rumbold to question the powers of the Bengal government when they intervened, and it is difficult to say that Rumbold's interpretation of the letter of the Act was wrong, though some of the arguments with which he sought to justify his action were unsubstantial and his attitude towards Hollond vindictive.

Whatever type of man Rumbold might have been, it is difficult, with these letters before us, to believe that with a better arrangement than that created by the Regulating Act, he would have come into conflict with the Supreme Council. As to the existence of any definite bias in Hastings against Rumbold as a contributory factor in the quarrel, we are left in the realm of darkness.



## **A Peep into the Macartney Papers in the Historical Museum, Satara \***

In the Historical Museum at Satara, Bombay Presidency, there is a collection of more than 3,000 English manuscripts which belonged to Lord Macartney, governor of Madras from 1781 to 1785. They relate to the period of his Indian administration as well as his subsequent career. The papers which belong to the period of his stay in India deal with every important topic of his administration. Many of these documents are copies of official records. There are, however, some private correspondence which, as such materials always do, possess very great value as supplementing official records, disclosing motives behind actions and in general giving a more vivid picture of the past. These papers are not arranged either chronologically or according to subjects. They have been kept unsorted and unclassified in twenty-two bundles.

Besides these bundles there are some volumes of documents relating to Lord Macartney's

\* These papers have now been transferred to the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute at Poona. The references are to the bundles as they were found at Satara.

administration of Madras bound in leather and in a good state of preservation. These are all official proceedings. There are also some letters from Sir John Macpherson to Lord Macartney which are kept separately, under the location English MSS. No. 22, and are of great value.

In the following pages I have attempted to convey some idea of the interesting materials that may be found in this very important collection of papers.

# I. *William Dunkin on the Regulating Act of 1773*

In Bundle I there is a document consisting of a few sheets of parchment having no heading or title on the top, but endorsed on the back of the last sheet, "Mr. Dunkin upon the Act of 1773." It is of great interest as being the opinion, on a section of the Regulating Act, of a man trained in law who was in India while the Act was in operation. William Dunkin, Barrister-at-Law, came out to India about July, 1782,<sup>1</sup> to try his luck in this country. That he possessed some backing from England

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hastings to Macpherson, July, 1782, ap. Dodwell, Warren Hastings' Letters to Sir John Macpherson, p. 146. Macartney writes to Earl of Hillsborough (3 September, 1782) that Dunkin arrived some weeks earlier—Satara Museum Macartney Papers, Bundle IV, No. 3.

appears from the fact that he brought a letter of introduction from Lord Shelburne to Hastings,<sup>2</sup> was also the bearer of a confidential letter from Laurence Sullivan to Lord Macartney<sup>3</sup> and was a subject of Macartney's correspondence with the Earl of Hillsborough.<sup>4</sup> His first task in Bengal seems to have been, as Macartney's agent, to attempt to convince Warren Hastings that he had misinterpreted the Madras governor's attitude towards him. Dunkin was not able to make in Hastings' mind any permanently improved impression of Lord Macartney,<sup>5</sup> though he succeeded well in his profession<sup>6</sup> and was in 1784 recommended by Hastings for the post of "examiner and reporter of all appealed cases from the mofussil to the Sudder Diwani Adalat."<sup>7</sup> In 1786 his name appears in the public proceedings of the Bengal

<sup>2</sup> Dunkin to Staunton, 16 October, 1782—*Idem*, Bundle IV, No. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Laurence Sullivan to Macartney, 19 October, 1781—*Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Macartney to Hillsborough, 3 September, 1782—*Idem*, Bundle IV, No. 3.

<sup>5</sup> The story of Dunkin's interviews with the governor-general and his efforts on behalf of Macartney is revealed by Dunkin's letters to Macartney in the Satara Museum Macartney Papers, Bundle IV.

<sup>6</sup> Dunkin to Macartney, 11 June, 1783—*Idem*, Bundle IV, No. 122.

<sup>7</sup>Same to same, 17 February, 1784, *loc. cit.*, No. 33.

government as an unsuccessful applicant for the post of Advocate General during Sir John Day's absence on leave,<sup>8</sup> and in 1788 as attorney for Mr. H. Richardson,<sup>9</sup> president of the Court of Justice at Chinsura. He afterwards went to England returning to Calcutta on 15 August, 1791, as a Knight and a Judge of the Supreme Court.<sup>10</sup> It appears that Sir William Dunkin sailed back to England early in 1799 by the "Berrington."<sup>11</sup>

In this document, Dunkin confines himself to the ninth section of the Act which created for the first time a central authority in British India by depriving Madras and Bombay of the power to conclude treaties or commence hostilities without the sanction of the governor-general and council of Bengal. The section reads :—

".....the said governor-general and council.... shall have.....power of superintending and controlling the management of the presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Bencoolen respectively so far and in so much as that it shall not be lawful for any president and council of Madras, Bombay or Bencoolen to make any orders for commencing hostilities or declaring or making war against any Indian princes or powers, or negotiating or concluding

<sup>8</sup> Press lists of the public department records of the Government of India, Vol. XI, p. 362.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. XII, p. 244.

<sup>10</sup> Bengal Public Proceedings, 19 Aug., 1791, pp. 2845-6.

<sup>11</sup> Imperial Record Department O. C., 8 February, 1799, No. 71.

any treaty of peace or other treaty with any such Indian princes or powers, without the consent and approbation of the said governor-general and council first had and obtained, except in such cases of imminent necessity as would render it dangerous to postpone such hostilities or treaties until the orders from the governor-general and council might arrive ; and except in such cases where the said presidents and councils respectively shall have received special orders from the said United Company ; and any president and council of Madras, Bombay and Bencoolen who shall offend in any of the cases aforesaid, shall be liable to be suspended from his or their office by the order of the said governor-general and council ; and every president and council of Madras, Bombay and Bencoolen for the time being shall and they are hereby respectively directed and required to pay due obedience to such orders as they shall receive touching the premises from the said governor-general and council for the time being ; and constantly and diligently to transmit to the said governor-general and council advice and intelligence of all transactions and matters whatsoever that shall come to their knowledge relating to the government, revenues or interest of the said United Company.”<sup>12</sup>

Literally interpreted, the Act gave Bengal powers of a merely negative character.<sup>13</sup> Even

<sup>12</sup> 13 Geo. III, Cap. LXIII, s. IX.

<sup>13</sup> According to the Madras government the controlling power vested in Bengal by the Act was “only a negative restraining power.” (Madras to Bengal, 15 January, 1780 ; ap. Dasgupta, *The Central Authority in British India*, p. 76.) They asserted, “.....there is nothing of a positive nature in this right. It cannot direct us to make or alter any treaty, to declare any war or to pursue any interest that we deem incompatible with the

this was further limited by the fact that in case of imminent necessity or orders from the Directors, the other presidencies could act independently of Bengal. Besides a number of loopholes were left open. What would constitute commencement of hostilities? The subordinate presidencies, without undertaking military operations, could act in such a way as to provoke the hostility of an Indian state. Would not the intervention of the Bengal government at such a stage be open to question?<sup>14</sup> Yet the responsibility for carrying on a war in the event of its outbreak would

welfare of our employers. In short it has no one power of compulsion. It has only the power of a simple assent or negative upon a question necessary to be proposed by us before we can begin any negotiation for a treaty or make any order for declaring war....." (Madras to Bengal, 13 March, 1780; ap. Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7.) Hastings also was of opinion that "This Act gives us a mere negative power, and no more. It carefully guards against every expression which can imply a power to dictate what the other presidencies shall do....." (Gleig, *Memoirs of the Life of Warren Hastings*, Vol. II, p. 41.)

<sup>14</sup> Compare the case of Bengal intervention in Madras negotiations with the Nizam in 1779 for the remission of the tribute due for the circars. On that occasion the Madras government argued that there was no declaration of war and no step was taken for negotiating or concluding a new treaty (Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 77). They contended, "... there is nothing in the act of Parliament which restrains our endeavours to serve the Company by application to any of the country powers to do justice or to show favour to them in anything which comes under our immediate cognisance, nor are we prevented by that act from making any declarations (except that of war) which we may think necessary in support of

lie partially on Bengal as the Directors had expressly made them responsible for the safety of the Company's possessions in India. Again Madras and Bombay might take all the preliminary steps to a treaty and then seek the consent of Bengal for its conclusion. In such a case the Bengal government would have no option left but to approve of it. The conduct of foreign policy was thus shared by the governor-general and council with imperfectly subordinated governments who could, if they liked, follow a different policy altogether to the great annoyance of the central authority. The vague wording of the Act embittered the relations of the presidencies during the ten years in which it was in operation, making it necessary to vest the governor-general and council with larger powers by the Act of 1784.

It is not possible to know either the occasion on which Dunkin's opinion was sought, or the party that sought it. In the course of his arguments, Dunkin makes out the following points :—

the rights and honour of the Company, so far as they are committed to our charge. If such requests and declarations from the misconstruction of the persons to whom they may be addressed . . . . . should at any time bring on a war, there is no help for it that we know of. . . . " (Madras to Bengal, 13 March, 1780 ; A. P. Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 86.)

(1) This Act being a remedial measure should not be literally interpreted.

(2) Though by a literal interpretation, the powers vested in the governor-general and council are only of a negative character, yet the Act should be interpreted as giving them express powers to negotiate treaties and commence hostilities.

(3) The Act has vested powers in the governor-general and council to commence hostilities and conclude treaties even with powers contiguous to the subordinate presidencies.<sup>15</sup>

(4) Madras, Bombay and Bencoolen had, though not expressly but by implication been made subordinate.<sup>16</sup>

(5) The authority of the governor-general and council may be exercised at the commencement of negotiations.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The Madras government regarded itself as the regular channel of the Company's negotiations with the Nawab of Arcot.

<sup>16</sup> On one occasion the Madras government had objected to its being styled a subordinate presidency.

<sup>17</sup> This decision is of importance, as contemporaries were not precise on the point. For example, on the occasion of the Madras negotiations with Tipu, Sir John Macpherson remarked, "... the president and select committee of Fort St. George as the representatives of the Company upon the spot must be supposed to possess powers to open a negotiation, tho' they may not conclude it finally but in cases of imminent necessity." (Macpherson's minute, Bengal Secret Consultations of the 20th March, 1783.)



The following is the text of the document with marginal notes as on the manuscript :—

Where the perview of an act of Parliament shows the act is intended as remedial or in which the public good is to be provided for, such act, tho' particular and express words may be wanting is always construed to give powers necessary for the attainments of the end in view such acts are always construed in the most liberal manner. Their construction is directly opposite to that given to penal statutes where a construction strictly adherent to the very letter is alone allowed.

Where regulating acts are made respecting powers formerly exercised and legally warranted tho' the new acts do not in express words annul every power formerly exercised yet they virtually annul every power inconsistent with the new regulations. Powers consistent are not annuled unless by express words.

These general principles may perhaps be found to apply in considering the powers given or taken away by the 13th Geo. 3d.

This act from its little preamble—recitals of former mischiefs, etc., etc., etc., must be considered as a regulating and remedial act.

It has however been doubted whether the act has given power to the governor general and council to make orders for commencing hostilities negotiating or concluding treaties against or with all country powers independent of the participation or approbation of the governor and council of any other presidency, even of that next—contiguous to such country powers or in which such power may actually reside. It

Has not the Nabob of the Carnatic considered and declared even [in] public treaties a country power ?

should seem that the act has vested such power in the governor general and council, etc.

The preamble states the mischiefs experienced in the then subsisting mode of administering affairs in India.—It then provides, the remedy intended for the better management of the Company's affairs in India—

That there shall be a *governor-general* and council at Fort William. The old names of Over all India. the governors and council of the other presidencies are preserved—This only is changed. Why? To mark even by name the superiority intended to be given in the following regulations :

To this governor general, etc., the other presidencies are not by express words made subordinate but in sense and necessary implication they undoubtedly are—

Before this act the presidencies of Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Bencoolen exercised severally the power of commencing hostilities and of negotiating and concluding treaties independent of and without communication with each other.

The mischief is too obvious to require being commented on—What is the remedy? That Madras, Bombay and Bencoolen shall not have the power to do so again without the approbation consent, etc., except, etc. This remedy by express words takes from them the powers and being silent as to the powers in such cases exercised by Bengal, by every legal construction leaves Bengal in full possession of its former with the accessions of those granted by the act. If the act went no further this would be the legal construction but it goes much further—it expressly enjoins the several other presidencies which whatever they were before, from the appointment of the governor

general, are certainly subordinate, to pay due obedience to such orders as they shall receive touching the premises from the governor general.

The act then goes on in very precise as well as comprehensive words to point out and direct a line of conduct from several gradations of inferiority dependent on the next [.....] of superiority. That Madras, Bombay, and Bencoolen shall constantly and diligently transmit to the governor general (the next above them) intelligence and advice of all transactions and matters whatever that shall come to their knowledge relating to governments revenues or interest of the company. For what purpose? That the governor general, etc., may in their discretion on such information give consequent orders to which by the before mentioned injunction the subordinate is bound to pay obedience. The act proceeding directs in like manner the governor general to transmit to the Court of Directors, (the next above them) all such intelligence, etc., of all matters whatever, etc., etc., that the directors may in their turn and in their discretion on such information give their orders to the governor general, etc., etc., which they are directed and required to pay due obedience to and in the last stage of this progressive remedy the Directors are in like manner required to convey such advice, etc., etc., to their next immediate superiors, His Majesty's ministers, etc., etc.

This view of the design of the act seems to prove that the act was intended as remedial, that the remedy designed was creating different but connected degrees of superintendence and control, that it has by express words taken the powers of concluding or even of commencing a treaty (for so the word negotiate should be understood), etc., etc., from the different presidencies enumerated.

That the powers of Bengal still remain, and that there are not any express words which say that the governor general, etc., etc., shall make treaties with the country powers in, or in the vicinity of the other presidencies, yet the act in express words commands the said presidencies to obey the orders of the governor general touching the premises which premises are hostilities and treaties. These words must have a liberal construction such as all remedial acts ever receive, and they without the least force but by plain and necessary [illegible] must be construed to have such operations as to warrant the governor general, etc., to negotiate and conclude all treaties whatsoever and wheresoever in India responsible to their superiors in the progression before enumerated.

By any other construction the intention of the legislature could not be carried into execution—They take away the powers exercised by one set of men but do not intend that there should be no such power in India. Where then was it intended to lodge the power? Certainly with those to whom the persons deprived of their former power are enjoined to pay obedience in all things touching the premises that is the very powers so taken away.

That the Directors understood the act in the sense here contended for appears pretty evident from their last general orders. Doubts had been conceived and arguments relied on by the subordinate presidencies against the extent of such power as the governor general, etc., assumed under the act. The Directors in the most unambiguous terms command the obedience of all such presidencies to the orders of the governor general, etc.

Any arguments drawn from instructions or orders given to Madras or other presidencies previous to the passing this act, do not appear applicable to support the

construction that the governor general, etc., has but a negative not an incipient or deliberating power—whatever were the intentions and consequent orders of the Directors previous to the act, appeared to them to be inadequate to their great purposes of government or the act never would have been made. They judged it necessary that power in India should change hands—They have by the act, had it placed in other hands still however to guard against inconveniences which might possibly arise from situations, they retained to the particular presidencies the former powers of acting on the two most important occasions—sudden emergency, and particularly orders from themselves—when the first occurs, the presidency taking responsibility may act on the instant,—when the second occurs all responsibility is in the Directors. The presidency is only answerable for strict obedience.<sup>18</sup>

A stronger instance to prove the necessity of such an act, cannot be adduced than from the negotiation the presidency of Madrass had commenced at the Nizam's Court—on this occasion they insist they had a right to commence the negotiations a treaty withholding the money due, etc., and that the governor general should

<sup>18</sup> The following passage is a marginal note by the side of the last paragraph :

In the case I have in my eye, respecting the presidency of Madras, I am pretty clear that in consequence of the particular order of the Directors the presidency might with great propriety and in strict conformance to the expression of the act have commenced and concluded a treaty with the nabob touching the particulars mentioned in their orders without intervention of G. G., etc., and have informed G. G. They were not bound to obey the future order of G. G. touching the premises.

not with propriety or by right have had any interference untill the matter was concluded upon—Then indeed they seem to admit that under act the approbation of the governor general was necessary.

It may indeed be matter of such delicacy, as well as of prudent policy with the governor general, etc. to select the times and occasions of assuming the exercise of this great power in the very commencement of negotiation or treaty—But that is not the question here to be considered—the power is alone the question—the expediency is a very different consideration.

## II. *The troublous eighteenth century*

The eighteenth century was in more than one way a perilous time for the East India Company's settlements in India. Besides the need of maintaining themselves against Indian and European powers, the Company was hampered by internal troubles arising from defective regulations, for example, the conflict of the civil and the military authorities, the claims of the king's forces and the dissensions between the presidencies. But the most dangerous and lamentable were the mutual jealousies and intrigues of the Company's officials in India arising from various conflicting personal interests and motives. Notorious instances are the dissensions in the Madras council in 1776 which led to the imprisonment of

Lord Pigot, and the Hastings-Francis quarrels in the Bengal council. In such a vitiated atmosphere Britishers had to be cautious about the activities of even their fellow countrymen. Extremely interesting is the glimpse afforded by the Macartney papers at Satara on the nature of the espionage maintained by Lord Macartney and Warren Hastings on the doings of fellow Europeans.

A number of people at Madras had allied their interests with the Nawab of Arcot's. They had lent money to the nawab and obtained assignments on his revenues for the repayment of his debts. During the Carnatic war it was necessary that the Nawab of Arcot should pay his dues to the Company and contribute towards the expenses of a war in defence of his territories. In December, 1781, the nawab had assigned to Lord Macartney in person the Carnatic revenues for this purpose. But Macartney soon found himself thwarted in his endeavours by the nawab, no doubt assisted and encouraged by a number of Europeans, themselves interested in the revenues. The nawab deputed A'zam Khan and Richard Sullivan to carry his complaints to the Bengal government against certain alleged high-handed measures of Macartney. After October, 1782, the efforts of Macartney to render the assignment effective

no longer received support from Bengal where his enemies got encouragement. The situation was full of danger for his lordship. The measures adopted by Lord Pigot in connection with the restoration of Tanjore (in the revenues of which certain Europeans were interested) to its Raja had led to that unfortunate governor's arrest and imprisonment by the majority of the Madras council. For Macartney and his employers the situation was rendered more dangerous by the fact that the war against Haidar Ali was going on and General Stuart claimed in his military command powers independent of the civil authority. Under the circumstances we need not wonder that Lord Macartney took the precaution of keeping himself informed about the movements of Europeans in the settlement. We are introduced into the right atmosphere at once by a whole bundle of papers <sup>1</sup> in the Satara collection. They give lists of persons daily present from the 5th March to the 7th December, 1782, at the nawab Wallajah's, at Ameer-ul-omrah's, <sup>2</sup> at Mr. Benfield's and at General Stuart's places. Messrs. Sullivan's (Richard ?) and Oakeley's <sup>3</sup> places are

<sup>1</sup> Within Bundle, VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Second son of the Nawab of Arcot.

<sup>3</sup> Not perhaps Charles Oakeley who was friendly to Macartney.



often included. The list for the 7th December, 1782, is as follows :—

“ *At the old Nabob—*

Dr. Story, Mr. Binny, Mr. Benfield.

*At the Ameer-ul-omrah—*

Dr. Story, Dr. Bulman, Mr. Binny, Col. Buck, Capt. Scott, Mr. Benfield, Mr. Redhead, Capt. Sullivan, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Ellis.

*At Gen. Stuart—*

Col. Pearse, Col. Malcolm, Capt. Scott, Capt. Smart, Capt. Gommaund, Capt. Campbell, Capt. Mackenzie, Capt. Vigor, Col. Gordon, Gen. Burgoyen, Major Davis, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Roebuck, Major Mackay, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Jackson, Dr. Bulman.

*At Mr. Benfield—*

Messrs. Ellis, Jones, Harker, Snow, and Col. Ross.

With the list for 20th April, 1782, there is the following note :—

“ Omerul Omrah went this morning to Mr. Benfield’s garden house and returned on hearing that some horse belonging to the enemy have come near St. Thomas Tank.

Mr. Benfield was with his highness this evening.”<sup>4</sup>

The same papers reveal how Warren Hastings also realised the utility of being watchful. Hastings’ hostile attitude towards Macartney had become clear by the beginning of 1783.

If he could have the council with him he would have carried the suspension of the Madras governor. At this critical time Macartney had some correspondents in Bengal who kept him informed of the development of affairs at the seat of the central authority. One of these was Captain Thomas Mercer, owner of the ship "Resolution." A slip of paper among his letters to Lord Macartney contains the following note<sup>5</sup> :—

"The enclosed letter and receipt was sent to the Post Office last night and upon the refusal of Mr. Belli (to whom the matter was referred by the clerk) the letter was withdrawn from the office—This very little transaction has been no doubt already reported to Mercer's good friend the governor general and will tend to increase that kind of esteem in which he is held by the said governor general."

At a subsequent date we read :

"I am not sure that all my letters by the post have reached your lordship's hands although I have used the precaution of putting them under the cover and sending them the post office, by the servants of a man who has frequent occasion to write to Madras on the king's business."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This is dated the 28th September. This was found folded with No. 56 of Bundle XXI.

<sup>6</sup> Mercer to Macartney, 21st December, 1783, Bundle XXI, No. 63.

III. *Relations of Warren Hastings and Lord Macartney and the part played by John Macpherson*

The private correspondence among the Macartney papers in the Satara Museum throw a flood of light on the relations of Warren Hastings and Lord Macartney, giving us information of the part played by Sir John Macpherson and of the attempts of William Dunkin to convince the governor-general of the friendly attitude of Macartney.

Sir John Macpherson was Macartney's old friend, and if official proceedings were the only source of information we would have to say that on the whole he stood well by Lord Macartney. On his way to Bengal from England in 1781 he halted at Madras. There he co-operated with Macartney in inviting Haidar Ali and the Marathas to come to terms. About the last week of September or the first week of October he reached Calcutta. Here however he joined Hastings in supporting Coote against Lord Macartney. He was also like Hastings inclined favourably towards the Nawab of Arcot whose interests he had during past years served as an agent in England. But in 1783 when Hastings was restless for the suspension of Lord Macartney, he did not for

once receive Macpherson's support. Macpherson indeed disapproved of the acts of the Madras government, but pointed out the difficulties of their situation and refused to concur in Hastings' resolutions for punishing Macartney and his select committee. This much may be gathered from the public records. He was not, however, acting from high motives and his unwillingness to oppose Macartney arose from the fact that Lord North's administration had fallen and Macartney was known to have many friends in the new administration.<sup>1</sup>

In his letters to Macartney in the Satara Museum, Macpherson repeatedly professed friendship for the Madras governor. Not long after reaching Bengal, in view of the growing estrangement between Hastings and Macartney, he suggested to Macartney the expediency of sending "a private minister to Hastings," adding,

"Why not let Staunton take a trip upon Mr. H (asting)'s return in February next. . . . But if ever you send a public minister to us, let it be Oakeley."

He promised,

"I shall find out the quarter from which any ill or mistaken notions have originated. I must annihilate

<sup>1</sup> Dodwell, Warren Hastings' Letters to Sir John Macpherson, p. xxxi.

those bitternesses of belief or prejudice which men wasted and worried in party grow open to.”<sup>2</sup>

In the next important letter we find Macpherson writing in the rebuking tone of a true friend :

“ You are, my Lord, shall I venture to say so, too much occupied about inferior affairs or too neglectful of my ideas of co-operation between the presidencies in not communicating to us, or if you would to myself your wishes about our great united arrangements for the public good.....Except in your wishes for supplies..... where have you my lord suggested a general arrangement? Where have you communicated a system of future measures.....With your confidential approbation in a general quiet line of measures I wished to move—my colleague here is all I wish, and Mr. Hastings (absent) will I hope not only approve but—be led. Upon your lordship then much depends.

“ .....except one short letter I have not had a syllable from you even about the affairs of your own government since my arrival at Bengal.

“ I assure you sincerely I am labouring here to the very best of my ability.....to extinguish all party ideas and expectations.....to draw the attention of the service to the public necessity and distress.....”<sup>3</sup>

In the dispute between Coote and the Madras government which arose out of Coote’s

<sup>2</sup> Macpherson to Macartney, 15th November, 1781, Satara Museum English MSS., No. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Same to same, 12th December, 1781, *Idem*.

desire of acting independently of the civil authority Macpherson seems to have been at first more on Macartney's side. In December, 1781, he wrote,

"We have reason to think that he [Coote] is enraged about our addressing our supplies to your lordship and your council, and not to him. We might as well assign a rice squadron to him as money uncoined—The supplies are for the government and not for his special command

Again,

"I well know what difficulties you have to manage the old warrior. He must be humoured and of all men of all governors you are the best to soothe and support him. His arrival here would only set us a little wild upon military matters. I have expressed home in full terms your difficulties."<sup>5</sup>

All these while Hastings was away from Bengal.

Perhaps both on account of the need of supporting Hastings who had returned to Bengal and of a genuine belief in the advisability of conciliating Coote, Macpherson agreed with Hastings in conferring extraordinary

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Same to same, 31st December, 1781, *Idem.*

powers on the general.<sup>6</sup> Coote exercising his powers of independent military command in

<sup>6</sup> Of interest in this connection is an incomplete letter addressed to Lord Macartney dated Calcutta, 26th May, 1782, in Bundle IX (No. 331). The last sheet is missing, but indications in the letter leave no doubt that it is from John Macpherson.

"I find your lordship is not well pleased with the interference of this government on the subject of Sir Eyre Coote's remonstrances. I had a very different idea upon this subject before.... I thought you would have considered it as a necessary public measure that could not affect your situation but by giving a better chance to the success of your operations by removing any further ground of dispute with the general..... He too is displeased with his pointed and special accusations of interference in his department mentioned to his secretary and to be received from him were not taken upon our records.....

"Do not imagine, my friend, that we have taken any partial line in this business. The general left us but one alternative. We knew his temper and the devoted attachment of the army. We looked to his successors, and after all what did we do? We advised harmony, and to leave him those powers in the conduct of the war, which every officer commanding an expedition under this government has always possessed.

"Complaints of a supposed supercession of the powers of your government must oblige us to draw the attention of the Company clearly to all we have done. There are those who wish in consequence of those supposed complaints to request both sides to consider our conciliatory advice (not commands) as if it had not issued. If that is your wish, my good friend, give me but a hint. I have laboured to support your cause which is the public cause, with all my efforts and so as to disoblige many friends,—most assiduously, ever since I have been here. I know the principles upon which your lordship acts are those of worth and good intention. I have gone further, I have unreservedly told to yourself and your deputed friend my free opinion of all your measures, (what would make my confidence and esteem more considering how few can bear, or at all like to be told such things but in words of praise).... I shall be very unhappy if any act of this government







the Carnatic War reduced the Madras government to a mere commissariat department. This led the Madras government to complain to Bengal that "the ancient constitutional powers of this government subsists no more." Thereupon the Bengal government wrote to Madras on the 4th July, 1782, requesting them to take their previous order in the light of advice.<sup>7</sup> We have a letter from Macpherson on the situation written on the following day (5th July), claiming that he remained attached to Macartney's interests. He told Macartney:

"Till now I never imagined you wished more than a talk about the superceding effects of our letters to you and Coote upon your differences and the powers given to him. But now I see matters in another light, and that you are really hurt at our interference and the use to which it has been turned.

"I foresee many and great evils from your remonstrance, nor in truth and candour can I think it warranted by facts or events.

"Has Sir Eyre Coote disobeyed your government. If he has the power was in yourselves and you should have exerted it. If he has not the caprice and disgusts of a worn out warrior are not sufficient to justify the spirit of your complaint.

"You are my lord I am certain aware of the danger of confessing that the constitutional powers of your

while I am a member of it can be supposed unjust or harsh towards your lordship."

<sup>7</sup> Dasgupta, *The Central Authority in British India*, pp. 193-218.

government are annihilated while entrusted to your hands. The constitutional powers of your presidency no power but the Company and Parliament can annihilate if those to whom they are entrusted do their duty.....

"However my friend I wish you to believe that I remain firm and attached to your public and personal interests.....

"I am always writing your lordship harsh (?) opinions. You with your usual good humour forgive me—you touch not on points where you see me warm. Consider I am chiefly committed for your success publicly and privately."<sup>8</sup>

The quarrel between Coote and the Madras government continued and Macpherson wrote :

"All this cannot end well if such is to be the immediate result of our letter upon the subject of your complaints."

"But I am tired of writing in this strain and you must be offended. If I did not at this time think my writing could be of use I would not write."

Then in the postscript :

"I have written to Sir Eyre finding fault with you but telling him from my knowledge that you love him and that he must not mind the *bitterness* of some of his people. I would do anything to keep you all well for I see more perhaps than all of you the storms that are gathering round us."<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the obstructions received by Macartney in his efforts to realise the Carnatic

<sup>8</sup> Macpherson to Macartney, 5 July, 1782, Satara Museum English MSS., No. 22.

<sup>9</sup> Same to same, 17 Sept., 1782, *Idem*.

revenues assigned to the Company and the consequent disputes with the Nawab of Arcot, we find Macpherson offering to play the part of the mediator. On the 12th August, 1782, he wrote,

".....my labour at the present hour is to make peace between your lordship and them"<sup>10</sup> [the Arcot durbar].

Again, a few days later :

"As your real friend it gives me pain to see a man of your temper, management and abilities so much engrossed by the little intrigues of dubashes, ameens, etc., etc."<sup>11</sup>....I like not your present disputes with the durbar....I have never yet directly nor indirectly replied to the nabob's and the ameer's letter to me. I think I can through Assim Chawn prepair both for an accommodation or reconciliation with your lordship. Pray write to me then whether you will agree to my ideas upon this subject. In the meantime if you sent for the ameer and the father and told them that you had letters from me requesting as an act of friendship to myself to forget where they had given you pain, and told that an arrangement was on the eve of being recommended by this government which would settle old disputes—....The event of such a discussion may be very favourable."<sup>12</sup>

But was Macpherson the real friend that he claimed to be? Doubts arise in our minds as we peruse the letters from William Dunkin to Lord Macartney in the Satara collection.

<sup>10</sup> Same to same, 12th Aug., 1782, *Idem*.

<sup>11</sup> Same to same, 31st Aug., 1782, fo. 6, *Idem*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, fo. 8.

Dunkin's letters tell us how he started with a strong reliance on Macpherson's friendship and how he gradually discovered that Macpherson had been false to Macartney and was, at the time of Dunkin's efforts with the governor general on behalf of the Madras governor, perhaps a factor which made it difficult to reconcile Hastings to Macartney. Dunkin describes his first interview with the governor general in October, 1782, in a letter to Staunton :

“ The governor general came to town on Sunday . . . this morning Mr. Macpherson called upon me and carried me to him—my reception proved to me strongly that Mr. Macpherson has been assiduous in his endeavours to efface the bad impressions of my enemies—I must also hope that the letter I deliver[ed] from Lord Shelburne is no small weight in my favour—I watched his countenance whilst he was engaged in the perusal and thought the appearance not inauspicious—he instantly desired Mr. Macpherson to read it—his countenance expressed equal pleasure—the governor said, the letter I delivered entitled me to the strongest claim upon his *civilities and attentions* (I observed he did not use the word *services*) and that he would be very happy to show them—after a quarter of an hour's conversation I left him and Mr. Macpherson together—they remained enclosed full two hours—on their coming into the room where I was, the governor, who seemed in great spirits, addressed me with assurances of his favourable dispositions towards me—that he hoped often to see me during his convalescent state, and more frequently when his health was re-established—that in

the meantime he put me under the protection of Mr. Macpherson who he assured me, would have pleasure in the charge etc.”<sup>13</sup>

In November, 1782, Dunkin reported to Macartney :

“ I am looked at suspiciously by the governor.... I have every reason to be pleased with Mr. Macpherson's behaviour. I really believe he would serve me if it was in his power—I beg your lordship to mention to him my conviction of his favourable disposition to me.”<sup>14</sup>

The next letter in this collection brings us to April, 1783. Dunkin now suspected that Hastings' prejudice against him was due to Macpherson, secured a private audience with the governor general and having impressed him was again asked to visit him frequently. He availed himself of this permission, and on one occasion discovered that inspite of being expressly commissioned by the Madras governor, Macpherson had done nothing to remove from Hastings' mind the suspicion that Macartney had intrigued to supplant him in Bengal. It is extremely interesting to hear Dunkin speak for himself :

“ The prejudices infused into Mr. Hastings against me, kept me as I concluded at an inaccessible distance

<sup>13</sup> Dunkin to Staunton, 16th Oct., 1782, Satara Museum Macartney Papers, Bundle IV, No. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Dunkin to Macartney, 9th Nov., 1782, *Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 163.

from him—but contrary to every hope I have gained an approach—I gave over the scheme I had foolishly adopted of trusting to the friendly interposition of Mr. Macpherson ; and by the advice of Mr. Stephen Sullivan, who earnestly desired I might have an explanation with Mr. Hastings, which he suspected Mr. Macpherson prevented, I requested a private audience—I at length succeeded. I was agitated and affected—I saw I affected him—I told him truths, with a warmth and firmness which truth only could support—and in half an hour gained a place in his confidence which I had long despaired of—He fully acknowledged his suspicions of me—that he had been taught to consider me as your and Mr. Burke’s devoted friend for purposes inimical to him (the aim of your declared enemies, and pretended friends, I have in many instances marked to be directed to have your interest and Mr. Burke’s considered as united, for the purpose of detaching Mr. Sullivan’s and Mr. Hastings’ friends from you)—that accounts he had recd. agt. me had made an impression on his mind.—He did not directly say he had these accts. from Mr. Macpherson, but he gave me cause sufft. to conclude it was from him alone—and that he was the conduit made use of by the Amers and Benfield—on his honor he assured me that neither Assim Cawn or Richd. Sullivan had ever mentioned my name to him—Good God ! the man on whom I relied to remove the effects of the malevolent insinuations of my enemies—who solemnly assured me he had used and was continuing to use his best endeavours to that end—and that he should be the very man who communicated those slanders—I do not say that Mr. Hs. told me so—but he gave me full reason to believe so, and he positively assured me that Mr. Mac. never once attempted to

undeceive him—Before I quitted him he gave me the most unequivocal assurances that I had entirely undeceived him—that he felt satisfaction at the [illegible] and hoped that from that time I would come to him frequently and freely—Now my dear Lord, before you go further I beg you to get from Mr. Staunton, if he thought it with his keeping, my letter to him describing my first conversation with Mr. Macpherson, and compare what there passed between us with what I have now written and shall write—this happened about three weeks ago—I availed myself of Mr. H.'s permission—I visited him frequently and soon perceived a familiarity growing from him—finding him one evening disengaged and in good humour, old Mr. Sullivan's relation was one subject—I recollected I had in my pocket the little paper of memorandums, you may remember I showed you of a conversation I had with Mr. James Macpherson shortly before I left London, with some marginal remarks of old Mr. Sullivan I had several motives for producing this paper in its original address it showed my confidence in Mr. Hastings (Mr. Sullivan's confidence in me)—Mr. Sullivan's observations on the attachment and friendships of the Macphersons—and, what I was most desirous of proving Mr. Sullivan's very anxious solicitude for a confidence and mutuality of interest between your Lordship and Mr. Hastings—and I hoped this might lead to the subject of your differences which as I stood I dared not to introduce—I was not disappointed—he read the paper with avidity—and immediately began to interrogate me as to its meaning “What did Mr. Sullivan mean by desiring you to tell Lord Macartney and me that now we might be sure of the interest of the Macpherson”? Mr. S. believed they were sincere in their intentions in supporting your,



Lrd Ms., and Mr. S's joynt interests, but that they were sincere only from conviction that they could not carry their own points witht, you etc. etc.—“ But [—] has joyn Lord Ms. interest with mine ?—the man engaged with my enemies to procure my recal and get into my seat and who disclaimed all such views.”—Has not Mr. Macpherson been able to satisfy you on this head ? Has he not explained how the matter originated and has he not done justice to L. Ms. honor against the possible suspicion of concealment or duplicity on his part ?—With strong marks of surprize he repeated—Mr. Macpherson—never—“ I heard indeed from *him* and others of his Lordship's views.”—My good Sir did he not communicate to you the subject of a letter he recd. from Ld. M. soon after my arrival at Madras ?—never—I was really astonished—he appeared in anxious expectation and begd. me to proceed—I took up the subject from the period when different men of consequence, I mentioned the Marquiss of Graham and Ld. Lewisham began to discover their views to succeed him—that Mr. Sullivan and others of his sincere friends concluded that the best way to disappoint such pretensions would be to secure the eventual succession, when either his own choice or the accidents of nature or fortune might occasion a vacancy, for a man who should owe his appointment to their joynt interests—from which an attachment to him and his friends might be fairly expected—that Mr. S. looked to Ld. M. not only as a man whose personal connexions must greatly contribute to the success of the scheme, what also as a man in whose honor and gratitude they all might safely confide—that he had tried the ground for and found it not impracticable—his great object there was to attach Lord M. and Mr. Hastings to each other—to embark them on one bottom

—he dreaded lest jealousies of each might be infused into the other—that he had desired me to explain his wishes to L. M. and hoped L. M. would by me inform to Mr. H. his entire attention to them—that his Mr. S's designs had their origin in his attachment to Mr. H.—that he never entertained—that L. M. never entertained the idea of supplanting him—that my information to L. M. was the first he had on the subject that he must recollect about that time the direct communication between him and L. M. was unhappily interrupted and that L. M. had some time before assured him he had no such views—that therefore and to prevent being subjected to the possible imputation of a disingenuous conduct—of concealed intentions, L. M. instantly wrote to his friend Mr. Macpherson and requested him to take the very first occasion to represent truth to Mr. H.—that on my arrival Mr. M. assured me he *had* done this—but that his communication to you (Mr. H.) had not the effect he wished or L. M. had intended—I saw or thought I saw a great deal of what was passing in Mr. H's mind—I went on to insist, with a warmth well warranted on my conviction that you, L. M. were sincere in your wishes to co-operate with him and manifest your confidence and friendship—this however appeared to be beyond his then faith.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Dunkin to Macartney, 12 April, 1783, *Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 235.

This letter is unfortunately incomplete. It is important as throwing light on the circumstances in which Macartney was put forward by his friends as a candidate for the post of governor-general. A letter in bundle IX from Lawrence Sullivan to Macartney, dated 19th October, 1781, corroborates Dunkin. Sullivan wrote “When it [Parliament] meets the Secret Committee will resume their enquiry, and some new regulations may take place. That of nominating a successor to the governor general and to

After a few days Hastings sent for Dunkin and told him that he was ready to believe his assurances of Macartney's amicable disposition if they could be reconciled with Macartney's having sent to the Directors, long before any act of the Bengal government which could give offence, his letters respecting his opinion of the conduct proper to be pursued towards

the commander-in-chief to fill any eventual vacancy will certainly be adopted. Though I have good reasons to believe there is no intention at present to remove Mr. Hastings, several persons of high connexions have been confidentially mentioned to me as candidates for this nomination and I have been pressed to consider of a proper man. Motives of public good as well as private attachment, prompted me to propose your lordship whenever my opinion has been asked. And as it appeared likely that great exertions would be made to obtain such an high and important situation, I took further steps to secure your lordship's success by imparting my wishes to Lady Macartney and apprizing her of what was in contemplation.....Mr. Dunkin who carries this despatch will also inform your lordship of the state this business is in, and of the mode in which it was set on foot.....

"I must always express my hopes that a perfect harmony will subsist between my friend Governor Hastings, and your lordship, because I am convinced that our affairs in India would derive great advantages from such an union."

Lord Macartney more than once declared that the governor-generalship was not an object with him and that he had never solicited it himself. Cf. Macartney to Directors, undated, *Idem*, Bundle III: "Your Hon'ble court...well knows that I never have solicited or applied for it in any address to you...and I do solemnly assure you that I never solicited or applied for it thro' any other channel, whether private friends or public ministers." (p. 48).

Tanjore and the Northern Circars.<sup>16</sup> Hastings then wrote to Macartney for an explanation on this point.<sup>17</sup> Macartney's reply, dated 10th May, was shown by the governor-general to Dunkin in a long private audience on the 11th June, 1783.<sup>18</sup> Regarding the effect produced by this letter on Hastings Dunkin reported to Macartney :

“ He assured me in the most explicit manner that independent of the proofs which you had been at the trouble of collecting and offering, which he declared to be fully satisfactory, the readiness and anxiety which you had manifested to give him satisfaction—had completely answered to his wishes and given him much gratification,—that he had so expressed himself in his answer to you . . . .In your letter to Mr. Hastings you promise to impart whatever you had written to the Directors on the subject of Tanjore—there was nothing enclosed on that subject or imparted in your letter except your very conclusive reasonings agt. his suspicions—This was not unobserved by him but he desired me to take no notice to you of what he conceived to be owing to accidental omission,—that independent of that you had given him entire satisfaction, etc. etc.”

At the same time we hear from Dunkin that “ the idea of proceeding to extremities is not entirely relinquished.”

<sup>16</sup> Dunkin to Macartney, 15 April, 1783, *Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 28.

<sup>17</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Dunkin to Macartney, 11 June, 1783, *Idem*, Bundle IV, No. 122.

In the interview. Dunkin showed to Hastings Macartney's letter to Macpherson of the 29th July, 1782 :

“ Your letter of the 29th July, contains three subjects—you begin with...the impropriety of the powers given to Sir Eyre—Mr. Hastings was sore on this subject—This part of your letter Mr. Hastings well remembers that Mr. M. read to him—This could but irritate the sore—The second head was your acct. of the communications I had conveyed to you and your request that he should explain it Mr. Hastings to preserve your honr. from the possible imputation of concealment or disguise—of this not one sentence was communicated to Mr. Hastings but he well remembered that M. then informed him he had it from you that your friends, not one word of his or any other friends had thoughts of your being removed to Bengal—The 3rd part of your letter was respecting the [illegible] of Sir Edwd. Hughes—Mr. Hastings is not certain whether he read that part or not—I am certain he did and it is not a good natured motive that convinces me.—”

“ To that part of your letter to Macpherson which mentions in very strong terms your sense of Mr. H.'s not having answered your letter he gave this as an answer—That nothing would have pleased him more than free communication with you by letters—but that your letters were all too well, that is too guardedly written—that had you written to him with that unreserved freedom you did to M. your correspondence would have been highly grateful to him, but that your letters expressed to be familiar ones, were to him only exceedingly forcible and well dressed arguments always against himself.... ”



God forgive me, I begone the man - He had his great spirit - my  
Dunkin was - on the Penfield was his instrument, this he thinks himself  
Dunkin and has his own bye game to play - The other he is suspicious of  
Mr. Shadings - You like his wit & genius - yet think it very true - he is strong  
You must know - but he must know you find to engage the support of  
You find when they can no longer with effect support you - and by  
making Mr. Shadings hostile to you he secures the powerful aid of Mr. Shadings  
by making your views on the first instance and in the long run  
support his own, as he suspects the time may come when to the right can  
stand only - this you owe to turn your eye in this part of my letter to Mr.  
Shadings & you provide his faithful maintenance of the Government & I hope  
that with his own endeavours attempted to do you justice with Mr. Shadings  
with his declining to me he had laboured it with a great deal of Mr. Shadings  
telling me he had heard from some of your views to discuss him but now  
on a little of capital action - and to him concluded, that I found now have  
you take into your own with an article I had the day before yesterday  
from the English Spectator - I have promised that there is the most confident

Dunkin to Macartney - 11th June, 1783

Dunkin felt that he now knew enough to sum up Macpherson's aims and ambitions :

"God forgive me if I injure the man—he had two great objects—The governing the Durbar one—in this Benfield was his instrument, tho' he thinks himself a principal and has his own by-game to play—the other the succession to Mr. Hastings—you like, his evil genius cross him at every turn—he is therefore your secret enemy—but he must seem your friend—to engage the support of your friends when they can no longer with effect support you—and by making Mr. Hastings hostile to you, he secures the powerful aid of Mr. Hastings' friends to frustrate your views in the first instance and in the long run to support his own, as he suspects the time may come when Mr. Hastings cannot stand—I beg you now to turn your eye to that part of my letter to Mr. Staunton where I describe his pathetic disclaimer of this government—compare that with his never once having attempted to do you justice with Mr. Hastings, with his declaring to me he had laboured it with effect—with Mr. Hastings telling me he had heard from him of your views to succeed him but never one little of explanation—and lett me conclude, what I woud now have you take into your view, with an anecdote I had the day before yesterday from Sir Elijah Impey. I shoud premisse that there is the most confidential communications between the govr. and him—he immediately made him acquainted with the, as he called them, astonishing discoveries he had made from me—I have been since frequently in private with Sir Elijah—He ask'd me if I coud nearly ascertain the time when your letter must have reached Mr. Macpherson's hands in which you had explained to him the information I had given you of the intentions of your friends to advance



you to this government—I cou'd pretty nearly—about that time he [Macpherson] took occasion to mention to Sir Elijah a very curious letter he had just received from you—He tells me here, sayd he, pulling out, but not reading a letter,—*that our common friends had thoughts of his succeeding to this Government*,—"Does the Baron think me a fool? pretty friends indeed they must be of mine who wou'd try to put another in my place"—at this time he was labouring to impress the Chief Just. with the idea of his consequence, and to hold himself out as the eventual successor."

It is interesting to find in this letter Sir Elijah Impey's attitude in this matter. We hear :

"The Chief Just. repeatedly and passionately wished you had given him the honr. of your confidence—assured me that from what he now knows of you if he had known it in time there never cou'd have arisen a disagreeemt. . . . lamented the consequences of the manner your confidence has been abused—and imputes everything to the duplicity of the man you trusted—He it was who has infused the jealousies he complained of existing—and he was the man you trusted to remove them."

At the next interview Hastings asked Dunkin to tell him the real reason for Macartney's hostility towards him, since he had started with the best disposition towards his lordship, and since a respect for his character which he had early formed had been increased by the handsome things conveyed to him of Macartney by Mr. Pechell and Mr. Sullivan.

conversations between the two - he immediately made his acquaintance  
with you as he called them, & in which he had made from him  
have been some frequently in private with Mr. Blyth in the whole one of the most  
astonish the time when you & the most have made to his presence hands  
in which you had explained to him the system on which you of the  
intention of your friends to arrange you to the present. I am sure the master  
about that time he took occasion to mention to Mr. Blyth, & in his conversation with  
he had just received from you - the latter one here, said he, pulled out, but  
not making a letter - that one conversation had thought of his  
according to the Government - I am sure that was a fact.  
justly friends would they must be of means who would try to find another  
in my place, & at this time he was, however, in company with Mr. Blyth  
with his view of his consequence, and he held himself out as the most  
important.  
The thought, & what he had probably would you had given him the chance  
of your appearance - of course that from what he now knows of you  
of the fact shown it is true there were some have a view, a disagreement.  
that he would not share immediately reason with - however, the manner  
of the manner your appearance had been sincere and in which every  
thing to the satisfaction of the man you found. That was what had  
inspired this passion he complained of evidently. It was the man  
you wanted to remove them.

Dunkin to Macartney—11th June, 1783

(To face p. 110)



"I as solemnly assured him that I never discovered in you but the most sincere desire of creating and increasing confidence and friendship—and that to promote this end whenever any difference of opinion might arise on a public matter, which you thought it necessary to declare you generally,—I could assert frequently, I believed always,—accompanied your public letter with a private one to Mr. Macpherson to whose friendly dispositions and conciliating good qualities you trusted to preserve private friendship—and regard between you—He shook his head repeatedly—I added that I had seen one or two of such your letters—and that such was my recollections of the manner you expressed your sentiments, that I now verily believed if Mr. Mac. had only read your letter to him, even without a friendly comment, they would have fully answered your purpose and prevent the fatal interruption which had taken place in your correspondence—" But I never saw those letters—why did he not write to me directly"—

"We had much of this sort of conversation—he did acknowledge that you might sometimes have had apparent causes of dissatisfaction—but insisted they must have arisen long subsequent to what he considered as the strongest mark of your early intended hostilities to him—I am almost certain that now there does not remain on his mind a resentment against you but from this single cause—it has made a deep impression."

In spite of these apparently successful interviews, Dunkin failed in his efforts to alter the situation by eradicating from Hastings' mind his suspicions of Macartney. Dunkin's

consciousness of failure was clear when he wrote in July, 1783 :<sup>19</sup>

“ However amicable the professions held out in the letter you received on the 27th June may be you may be assured that at the time of writing the letter, and ever since, the most hostile measures are by every mode of address attempted.”

From the official records we find that April, May and June of 1783 corresponding to the period of Dunkin's comparative success was a time of lull in the conflict between the presidencies of Bengal and Madras. But on the 7th July, 1783, the Bengal board had before it the Madras letter of the 25th May, 1783, refusing to obey their second order to restore the Carnatic revenues to the Nawab of Arcot. Hastings was furious and became impatient to punish the Madras government for disobedience. In the proceedings of the 21st July, 1783, the governor-general recorded a lengthy minute on the subject, covering no less than thirty-three pages of the consultations. He asserted that there was no use showing “ tenderness and forbearance ” to the Madras government, but did not suggest the punishment that should be meted out to them.<sup>20</sup> It was of this situation

<sup>19</sup> Dunkin to Macartney, 22nd July, 1783, *Idem*, Bundle IV, No. 111.

<sup>20</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-4.

that Dunkin wrote on the next day—the 22nd July, 1783<sup>21</sup> :

“ Mr. Wheler and Mr. Stables remain inflexible, and will not be frightened or cajolld into the measures of Mr. Hastings....atlength a long minute has come forth written by Mr. Hastings....he has not proposed anything in particular as the punishmt of your delinquency—but expects that the other members of counl. will propose what he has pointed at as your proper punishment—This paper is to go in circulation.”

Dunkin fully utilised the interval to ensure the support of Wheler and Stables for Macartney. We let Dunkin speak :

“ I have had many conversations with Mr. Wheler and Mr. Stables on the subject—they did me the honor to desire I woud commit my thoughts to writing—I have had the good fortune to please them—It is possible they may think some things I have written may be introduced into their minutes in answer to governr.—I coud but guess at his—but I took as good random aim as I coud at what I suspected it might be—Mr. Macpherson is not able to attend counl. He is ill upon the water somewhere abt Garretty.....“ Mr. Hastings says that your last long public letter is a libell on the governmt and contains, tho not in direct words, by the plainest implication, a charge agt M. Wheler and him of being bribed by the nawab of Arcot I attempted to reason with him agt the probability of your ever intending to insinuate such a thing—that if your words coud bear another explanation I was certain you must have meant them in

<sup>21</sup> Satara Museum Macartney papers, Bundle IV, No. 111.

this other—no—he sayd—it was too plain—I concluded with saying that I could not presume to reason from the words of a letter I never had read—but that I thought it not at all like your lordship, if you really intention'd such an opinion that you would take such a mode of bringing forward the charge—I went immediately to Mr. Wheler, but Mr. H. should by infusing such an idea irritate him agt you and thereby make him more easy from such resentment for the imputation of being bribed to joyn in measures hostile to you—I had very little trouble on this head—Mr. Wheler assured me that he did not understand your letter in the sense Mr. Hastings did and that he very well saw into Mr. H's motive—I dont know wher. you would think it right to address a letter to Mr. Wheler on this subject—if yes—say you had this acct. from me—I hope you will never again have occasion to write a private letter to Mr. Hastings—he is the most dangerous of men.

“To get over Mr. Macpherson to him on some trying questions now before Counl. he affects to recollect that he believes Mr. Macpherson did speak to him on the subject of your Lordships letter of July, 1782, and that he is sorry he forgot it—He is not yet to me ventured to acknowledge his want of memory—my proof agt him are too damning—to be sure I have damned myself with him by having been too correct he affects however particular attention to me—& I go after to his house—His first accts. to Mr. E. Impey and Stephen Sullivan of the effects of the discovery I had made, he can never get over—but above all—his allowing me to write the full detail to old Mr. Sullivan.”

How the situation developed two days later is described in the first of some notes found

in this collection whose writer and addressee we are left to conjecture <sup>22</sup> :

“ The ferment is still as violent as when I wrote you last, and the—<sup>23</sup> is still determined on repeating the positive orders for renouncing the assignment if he can by any means get anybody to second him, wch, now seems doubtful he made a direct and violent attack on Mr. S.<sup>24</sup> to support him alledging that by his supporting the measure hitherto, he was now so far committed, he could not recede....Mr. S. swore by—he never would and that he was sincerely sorry he never had anything to do with it, but that since now his Mr. S. eyes were open to his actions, it would be unpardonable.

“ The above gave occasion to the public to expect a duel and even [illegible] a meeting was appointed, but what prevented it or further, is not said ;

“ The Thane<sup>25</sup> is nearly very ill and on the water this fortnight—but if it had not been really so ; it is supposed he would [illegible] himself not fit for duty at this period, as he finds the—so determined on this matter that he would invoke heaven and earth to enforce Mr. S. support and afraid absolutely to act in direct contradiction, being too much at his mercy ; his native prudence is his only refuge.”

<sup>22</sup> These are not in the form of letters, but are notes. They are partly in cipher, accompanied however by explanations. Most of them bear the endorsement “ J. Staunton ” with the date of receipt at Madras. They were in all probability written to Macartney.

<sup>23</sup> The ‘ — ’ stands for ‘ governor general.’

<sup>24</sup> Stables.

<sup>25</sup> John Macpherson.



“ The—accuses Thane with not communicating to him Ld. M.’s private letters entire and only those parts least likely to reconcile—report adds that he went over the water to reproach him personally for it.”<sup>26</sup>

In a subsequent note we read :

“ Mr. S. in conversation with me, set him down as absolutely mad ;—but on reflection argeed that ‘ the—being near his political death, wanted to commit some act of violence, to exceed all he has done before, and involve with him the other three—and to come on his defence in England, in good company and ensure the support of all their friends ’—He exclaimed ‘ By—he shall have no support from any of mine, I’ll take care of him.’ ”<sup>27</sup>

So Hastings failed to induce the council to suspend the president and select committee of Madras. On the 31st July, 1783, he again brought in a minute in which he urged the council to decide speedily, crying out that “ in a case of this nature any decision is preferable to suspense.” The Supreme Council therefore decided to repeat the order to restore the assignment.<sup>28</sup> Upon this Dunkin, not a little disappointed, wrote to Macartney<sup>29</sup> :

“ Mr. Shore....is much mortified at the want of firmness in his friend Wheler on his agreeing to the late

<sup>26</sup> No. 23, dated 24th July, 1783, Idem, Bundle IX, No. 273.

<sup>27</sup> No. 25, 6th August, 1783, Idem, Bundle IX, No. 272.

<sup>28</sup> Beng. Sec. Cons. of 31st July, 1783, and 15th August, 1783.

<sup>29</sup> Dunkin to Macartney, 3rd September, 1783, Satara Museum Macartney papers, Bundle IV, No. 39.

resolution to repeat the orders of your presidency which he must be convinc'd you will to his [illegible] refuse your compliance with, and which he and most of the thinking men here are convinc'd you never should comply with—He has repeated to me the assurances which Mr. Wheler in person gave me that this is the last step he, W. will take in this business—But what can I be sure of when he so repeatedly assured me he would agree to no sort of censure—I consider the repetition of the order as a censure, he wishes it not to be so understood—Mr. Shore has strongly advised, and I know his advice has great weight, that on any future attempt at censure for your expected repeated disobedience he, W. shall deny his assent and propose referring the whole matter to the Court of Directors—This I believe is the principal part of Mr. Stables' minute on the late decision—He told that was a part he would select from the reasons I gave him—I believe he is a firm honest but not a very clear or a very well informed man—his manners have not the most finished polish—The Govt. and he are at open war as to our friend Mr. Macpherson, I am nearly convinced there is no man the Government has a more extreme contempt for—But he has use for every sort of tool and he knows the use of most—at present the idea of Finga's (?) power with Mr. Robinson<sup>30</sup>—and so to Lord North—gives him a temporary consequence—tho' I believe few subjects of contest can arise in which he will act with the Governr unless they are in favour of the old Nabob, or against your Lordship."

<sup>30</sup> John Robinson, the Secretary to the Treasury was entrusted by Lord North with the superintendence of Indian affairs.

However the Madras government for the second time refused to restore the Carnatic revenues to the nawab. Hastings again proposed the suspension of the Madras government, but again failed to carry the council with him.<sup>31</sup> We learn from the Satara manuscripts that

“ On Monday last Hastings came to the board with a determined resolution to destroy the whole Madras board, not Lord Macartney alone—he called upon Macpherson to assist him, who did not positively say no, but harangued for an hour and concluded saying it would be better to delay a little longer, until they should hear from England—With no little vexation of spirit he then asked Stables who directly and bluntly said ‘ No—if they have done wrong let them answer to the Court of Directors.... ’ ”<sup>32</sup>

Though the danger was over it was a time of anxiety for Macartney’s friends. As has been noticed in Dunkin’s letter to Macartney they were a little nervous on the score of Wheler. The same nervousness appears in one of these anonymous notes :

“ Moore and Dunkin think there is no danger of his (Wheler’s) joining Hastings, but his conduct as you have seen by the minutes sent you in direct opposition to his promise to Dunkin, leave great room to fear.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-6.

<sup>32</sup> Cipher notes, No. 34, dated 16th October, 1783, *Idem*. Bundle IX.

<sup>33</sup> Same, No. 35, undated, *Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 274.

This anxiety was however set at rest by Wheler's assurances that

"Notwithstanding he joined in enforcing by order he pledged himself he would not in punishment." <sup>34</sup>

In December, 1783, the dispute over the question of the Carnatic revenues was set at rest by the Bengal council informing Madras that they had determined to suspend the further consideration of the subject until the decision of the Directors arrived.<sup>35</sup>

When the storm over the Carnatic revenues had subsided Macartney learnt from Dunkin :

"I have lately had several conversations with Mr. Wheler and Mr. Stables—they speak particularly the latter of your principles and actions with the highest respect—they express themselves as happy that the contest respecting your surrender of the Carnatic revenues is gon (sic) to rest—it will not again have either of their support etc. etc. Mr. Stables this morning desired me to apologize to your lordship for his not having answered a very obliging letter you wrote to him which he shew'd to me—I have it in direction from him to answer you that his not having replied to you arises from the peculiarity of his situation—that he is chagrind and distressed at almost everything that comes before him—that he cannot commit himself to paper from, amongst other reasons, a fear of his letters being intercepted—that he has reasons to be convinced that has already happened

<sup>34</sup> Same, No. 38, 14th November, 1783, *Idem*, Bundle XXI, No. 144.

<sup>35</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

to him—that he has repeatedly expressed in the strongest manner at the board that the complaints of the nabob found too ready access to their records—and consequently a passage home unopposed by your contradictions or explanations—that he always has given and will give it as his opinion that this government shou'd afford no means of conveyance home to the representation of any disputes which originate between your government and the country powers—but that the whole shou'd be left to your transmission that you might not be prevented of the opportunity of accompanying explanations.” <sup>36</sup>

#### IV. *Capt. Mercer's letters to Lord Macartney*

We have so far referred only to the efforts of William Dunkin. There are among the papers also letters from another friend of Macartney, Captain Thomas Mercer of the ship “Resolution” whom we have already noticed (*ante* p. 91). He seems to have been another “private minister” of the Madras governor. He had set to work on Macartney's behalf before William Dunkin had commenced to do so. Dunkin's first interview with Hastings took place in October, 1782. Capt. Mercer reports the results of his efforts from April, 1782. Perhaps Macartney considered that Dunkin with his legal training would be a better mediator than the blunt Captain. Mercer

<sup>36</sup> Dunkin to Macartney—30 December, 1783, Bundle IV, No. 37.

got into touch with Macpherson, but it does not appear that he had any interview with the governor-general in Macartney's interest. Nor does it appear that Mercer went to work in the same systematic way as Dunkin.

On the 10th April, 1782, Mercer wrote to Macartney :

"I have seen your Lordship's acquaintance of the Supreme Council these several times. I did not let the first occasion pass by without entering into the affairs of the Carnatic : not like a man commissioned, nor a man particularly informed, but like a man impel'd by good wishes for a cause of great general concern."

This acquaintance of Lord Macartney was, it is clear from subsequent references, no other than Sir John Macpherson. The same letter continues :

"I have since fallen into the company with a Major Palmer, a very confidential man with the govr. and took occasion to express doubts as to the vigorous zeal of administration here respecting the Carnatick—it would be vigorously supported was his answer."<sup>1</sup>

The next letter from Mercer to Macartney found in these collections was written ten months later. Mercer had begun to suspect Macpherson as a "false friend." He wrote :

"It was your lordship made me acquainted with the Thane of the Isles but I have a violent suspicion that

<sup>1</sup> Mercer to Macartney—10 April, 1782, Bundle XXI, No. 54.

our acquaintance will be of a very short duration—His jollity, seeming frankness, and love of information, are (if I am not mistaken) unnatural and put on to serve his purposes, and if he has anything besides a cunning cringing true Scottish mind without love for the publick or any other virtue..... ”<sup>2</sup>

In a letter, dated 8th June, 1783, Mercer informed Macartney that there were others who suspected Macpherson :

“ .....the member of the Council whom your lordship made me acquainted with, whom your lordship honoured with your best opinions, but of whose sincerity I very soon entertained well found suspicions, is believed by some others, as well as myself to be the prime mover—but it is immaterial how this is.

“ The Hunto (giving the word the Spanish pronunciation) which is now about to decide upon yr. lordship’s merits, consists of four members—one of them is a bold man, one is a foolish man, one is a cunning man, and one I cannot hazard an opinion of not having had sufficient occasions to observe him, and I do not believe the whole quartetto contains a friend or an admirer of your lordship..... ”<sup>3</sup>.

Some days later Macartney received the following words of encouragement from his sailor friend :

“ Pursue my good lord with unremitting ardor, the admirable career you have chosen and let what will

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Macpherson is also referred to as “ the Thane ” in No. 23, Bundle IX, *vide ante*, p. 115, Mercer to Macartney—30th December, 1782, Bundle XXI, No. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Bundle XXI, No. 56.

happen from the enraged man of Belial, do you secure a right to the applause of your sovereign the support of the publick.....and the approbation of your own mind..

Hastings had likened Macartney to “ the black eagle ” portending disaster. “ to every land and state over which he casts the shadow of his wings.” The great governor-general in his turn did not escape being assigned a place in zoological nomenclature. Macartney’s friend painted him thus :

“ .....if he was chained like a baboon within a circle of twenty feet diameter, he would pelt you whilst a stone or a clod of earth was to be found within the sphere of his activity—to be less figurative—your lordship’s integrity, ability and the just idea entertained of you at home, are crimes not to be forgiven by an Indian rajah with a white face : the most terrible animal in God’s creation.” <sup>5</sup>

Before Hastings had talked in the Council about punishing the Madras government, Mercer had scented what was coming and promised :

“ . . . —If the diabolical spirit of Bengal should proceed to extremity and you should prefer staying in India for redress, you may look upon me with the most perfect reliance, as your banker for twenty thousand pagodas . . . ” <sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mercer to Macartney—20 June, 1783, *Idem*. Bundle **XXI**. No. 73, fo. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.*, fo. 1(b).

<sup>6</sup> *Loc. cit.*, fo. 2(b).



After the failure of Hastings' efforts to suspend Macartney, Mercer wrote to Macartney (29th October, 1783) :

"He (your arch-enemy) is sorry for having acted such a part but not from a good principle but because of its possible consequences—no contrition for having impeded and injured the public good—no regret for having injuriously thought of and treated your lordship's character."

"Spare him not my good lord." <sup>7</sup>

V. *Estrangement between Warren Hastings and Sir John Macpherson over the recall of Bristow in 1783*

Sir John Macpherson had proved a false friend to Lord Macartney. He fell out also with Warren Hastings. One cause of difference between him and the governor-general arose over the removal of Bristow from Lucknow. We find interesting references to their disagreement over this question among the unsigned notes referred to already (p. 115). No. 25 with the note "J. Staunton 20th August 1783 Madras" on it <sup>1</sup> informs us :

"Debates ran very high last Council day about the removal of Mr. Bristow again it is now known he got up this thr. [6]; (sic) who it is as well known was paid for it; the—<sup>2</sup> now sees it, and wishes to displace him."

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, Bundle XXI, No. 78.

<sup>1</sup> *Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 272.

<sup>2</sup> ' — ' stands for 'governor general.'

No. 29, bearing the date 10th September, (1783), has the following :

“ There is not much said about the suspension—Mr. Bristow is now the bone of contention—Mr. Wheler is at Moorshidabad and it is imagined will not return untill the May despatch from England arrives—Mr. H. wants his assistance much, for he is now at his wits end to remove Bristow—Mac—will not assist him and has brought Mr. Stables to his side—The Mac's are out of faction, two cousins—MacGregor and Macdonald were removed from lucrative commands lately—”<sup>3</sup>

No. 38, dated 14th November, reports :

“ Bristow's recall has been long a favourite object ; Macpherson received the lacks is firm these (*sic*) but it is now said, that Hastings has offered him as much to give up B—w ; if this is true you guess what follows.... ”<sup>4</sup>

We learn from No. 40 (undated) that

“ The Narbudda Packet carried home the most infernal letters from Hastings and Sullivan against Macpherson.”<sup>5</sup>

Again No. 49 bearing the initials G. L. S. Esq. and dated the 3rd January, 1784, tells us :

“ Mr. Macpherson sails in the Burmont for the benefit of his health, wch is very bad—he has at last given up Bristow and he is removed, with every other gentleman at the Court of Lucknow, except Major Palmer who is

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 270.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, Bundle XXI, No. 144.

<sup>5</sup> In a subsequent reference No. 40 is dated 22nd but the month is not mentioned.

to remain as private agent and plenipo. The—public—charge—Hastings—openly—with taking the man's—money—and—then betraying—him—If the accounts from Europe take the complexion wch. we here suppose—he is gone—for—ever from Bengall.

“The fall of Bristow, is only known today, and Mr. Macp. sails tomorrow—so little has it been expected, that it was quite forgot, the Govr. having sailed so often—

“...it is suggested that he only waited the accts. from Europe being decisive—to determine him whether to take this line or to stand firm.”<sup>6</sup>

## VI. *Stories of fortunes rapidly accumulated*

*Draft from Mr. John H.....to Mr. Oakes,  
Nov. 5, 1783, per Rodney*<sup>1</sup>

“What think you of an agency for the provision of grain and other articles for the coast which gave the agent 50% on the prime cost.—Mr. Auriol, the Secy. to the govt. general actually enjoyed this profit—he had 15% on the prime cost, with the freight and other charges added to it, in short 15% on the invoice which amounted to 50 on the prime cost and made his clear gains in the course of less than a year amount to full 3 lacks of rupees. The same gentleman being obliged to come to the coast on account of ill health was nominally sent on an embassy to Goa with the allowance of 3000 Rs. a month which he enjoyed the whole time he was here....”

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, Bundle IX, No. 258.

<sup>1</sup> Bundle I.

*Mercer to Macartney—8th December, 1783*<sup>2</sup>

“The late Colonel Hannay, and Major Balfour now going home, were collectors of districts subordinate to Mr. Middleton—The former in a very short time amassed £2,00,000, came down to Calcutta and died. The latter is said to have more than half that sum, but is spoken of as a man of moderation and humanity, beloved by the people over whom he had power and it is said he might have taken five times the sum he did take.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Bundle XXI, No. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hastings to Macpherson—Benares, 12th Dec., 1781 :

“Lucknow was a sink of iniquity. It was the school of rapacity. What will you say of beardless boys rejecting with indignation the offer of monthly gratuities of 3000 and 5000 rupees ? What will you think of clerks in office clamouring for principalities, threatening those who hesitated to gratify their wants with the vengeance of patronage and in the confidence of exhaustless resources gambling away two lacks of rupees at a sitting, . . . .” ap. Warren Hastings’ letters to Sir John Macpherson, ed. Dodwell, p. 106.

Col. Hannay was an officer of the Company who was permitted to enter into the service of the Nawab of Oudh. He was allowed to rent the provinces of Gorraekpore and Barraitch and to command the military force in the districts. His oppressive administration ruined the districts and contributed to the rebellion in Oudh. When in 1778 Hannay entered the service of the nawab he was a man in debt. Before the end of 1781 when the nawab dismissed him from his service he was “understood to have realised a fortune of 300,000 l.” *Vide* Mill, *History of British India*, Bk. V, Ch. 8, pp. 386-8 (Third edition).

Of Hannay, Warren Hastings wrote to Macpherson in the letter referred to above—“I was resolved to reform it. The Nabob demanded it, and with what face could I refuse it ? I made no distinctions for my own friends. Hannay was particularly mine.” *Dodwell, op. cit.*, p. 107.

“ When deputees can get such sums, and one of whom esteemed a man of moderation, it is reasonable to suppose the principal who has not a scruple of that virtue—got much (very much) more—

“ But your lordship may well be surprised to hear that little Davy <sup>4</sup> is going home with a large sum of money (I have heard estimated at £1,20,000) because he has been in Bengal, very little more than two years. But this surprise will abate, when your lordship is informed that the deepest and most money getting intrigues are supposed to have been committed to the said Major, jointly with Mrs. Hastings between whom a quarrel has lately happened and it is very publicly said ‘ Joint office ’ and the animosity has been carried to such a length, that the heavy baggage of the Major, which was all on board the ship, in which the said lady is to go home, has been relanded. But I am told mediators are to work..... ”

#### No. 41 <sup>5</sup>

“ Major Davy who was to have gone with Mr. Hastings has taken his passage in another ship—they have fallen out about the divisions of the plunder.

“ The zemindary of Dinagepore from seventeen lacks

<sup>4</sup> Major Davy who was Hastings’ Persian Secretary. Hastings also called him “ little Davy, ” *vide* Dodwell, *op. cit.*, p. 142, p. 165 and p. 185.

He was sent to Oudh as Palmer’s confidential assistant in carrying out the provisions of the Treaty of Chunar. There are certain letters written by Davy to Macartney from Benares in October, 1781 in Bundle XVI.

<sup>5</sup> This is one of the anonymous notes partly in cypher already referred to. There is no date or endorsement on the note. The information “ Sr. E. I. (Elijah Impey) embarks next Sunday for England ” may serve as an approximate date.

has been fixed—down—to thirteen—pr. on the—lease in—perpetuity—of which—she—wanted—too much—and would not see—Davy for attempting to restrain—her— ”

*Note from Capt. Thomas Mercer, dated Madras, 31st December, 1784* <sup>6</sup>

This note says that Capt. Lawrence Gall had been in the beginning of 1783 appointed to command a corps of 1,200 sepoy in Burdwan the expenses of which was to be paid by the raja. The corps was established with the object of helping in the collection of the revenues. The raja thought that 200 of his peons could perform the service, and prayed for its abolition. This was however in vain. Now as Capt. Gall wished to depart from India, it was proposed to the raja that if he gave Gall a lack and a half of rupees the corps would be abolished to which the raja complied.

“ The Raja has the immaculate word of honour of the great politician that the corps shall never be re-established under any pretence or denomination whatsoever. Where is the little minded pitiful fellow who dare to censure this transaction ! ”

Mercer calls this

“ a further (tho’ not extraordinary) instance of Mr. Hastings’ economy and easy method of making the fortunes of his friends which came to my knowledge yesterday.”

## The Treaty of Mangalore

The treaty signed at Mangalore on the 11th March, 1784, between Tipu and the representatives of the Madras government concluded the second Mysore War. Some historians describing this as a “disgraceful compact” lay the entire responsibility on what they call “the perverse government of Madras.” This is an echo of the dispute which raged in 1783 and 1784 between the governments of Bengal and Madras over the negotiation and conclusion of the treaty.

A fundamental principle was invoked in the quarrel. Warren Hastings, the governor general, held that the surest means of obtaining a lasting peace was to compel the enemy, by a vigorous prosecution of the war, to sue for peace.<sup>1</sup> The governor of Madras, Lord Macartney followed in the Carnatic War the opposite

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bengal to Madras, 24th March, 1783, Beng. Sec. Cons., 1st April, 1783, Vol. 71, p. 77, which defines the policy “which in all countries but especially in this, forms the readiest and the easiest road to peace. That policy consists in a vigorous prosecution of the war; . . . . a guarded avoidance of that submission which in eagerly soliciting and courting pacific arrangements adds to the insolence, encourages the obstinacy, and justifies the perseverance

course of first approaching the enemy with terms, and thereby displaying to him his eagerness for peace. Soon after his arrival in 1781 he had jointly with Sir Eyre Coote, Sir Edward Hughes, and John Macpherson invited the Marathas and Haidar Ali to come to terms. These overtures proved abortive, and Macartney waited to grasp the first favourable opportunity of concluding a peace. While we have to admit that in principle Hastings was right and Macartney was in the wrong, it would not be fair to Macartney, considering the circumstances in which his government was placed, to lay the entire blame on him. Besides, the disputes over the negotiations did not arise merely from a difference of principle. The question had come up at the end of a series of quarrels between the two presidencies which had made it impossible for them to work together in harmony.

The Regulating Act of 1773 had vested the government of Bengal with certain powers of control over Madras. The governor general and council of Bengal had employed their newly acquired authority to arrogate to themselves

of the enemy in war, and in every case gives him the plea of dictating conditions."

The same view was held by Hastings in his letter to Sir John Macpherson, dated Benares, 1st Nov., 1781, ap. "Warren Hastings' Letters to Sir John Macpherson," ed. Dodwell, No. XXI.



a position which was certainly not justified by the letter of the Act. In 1780, after the outbreak of the Carnatic War, they emphatically established their supremacy over the Madras government by suspending the governor, John Whitehill. The subordinate government was so far prostrated at the feet of the superintending presidency that it gave up its powers of conducting the war in favour of Sir Eyre Coote<sup>2</sup> who had been despatched from Bengal to save the situation in the Carnatic. The high water-mark of the authority of Bengal was reached in the year following when the Supreme Council, without the participation of Madras, concluded an agreement with the nawab of Arcot by which the latter assigned to the Company the revenues of the Carnatic for the support of the war. On that occasion the superintending government sent an agent of its own to watch over the execution of the treaty.<sup>3</sup> The arrival of Macartney in June, 1781, however, altered the situation. He was a nobleman of considerable ability and had filled several high offices in the service of the state. He had influential connections in England. Besides, he was not a covenanted

<sup>2</sup> Dasgupta, *The Central Authority in British India, 1774-84*, Ch. V.

<sup>3</sup> *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 291.

servant of the Company, and his appointment was a departure from the usual practice. In short, he was far above in merit and rank to those who had immediately preceded him in the governorship of Madras. Naturally therefore the Supreme Council could not continue to enjoy a position which was not supported on a strong legal foundation. To add to this Hastings developed an unjustifiable hatred of Macartney. The struggle between the two presidencies which thus became inevitable raged throughout the years 1782 and 1783. The Madras government refused to obey the orders of the Supreme Council, which had suddenly changed its attitude towards the Carnatic assignment, to restore his revenues to the nawab of Arcot. It also went against the wishes of Bengal by not yielding to Coote its powers of conducting the Carnatic War. Hastings was so incensed that he meditated the suspension of the president and select committee of Madras, but not having the council on his side was unable to carry such a resolution.<sup>4</sup>

Under such circumstances co-operation on any matter was impossible. Yet without a

<sup>4</sup> Bengal Secret Consultations, 15th and 20th March, 1783, Vol. 70.

spirit of friendly co-operation it was impossible to work the Regulating Act. That Act had made it necessary for Madras to obtain the sanction of Bengal before concluding a treaty, except in the cases of imminent necessity and express orders from the Court of Directors. The Supreme Council, however, had no desire to allow the Madras government to negotiate. It was contemplating during the first months of 1783 the forfeiture of all the normal powers of the subordinate presidency, and had resolved to vest Sir Eyre Coote not only with sole powers of conducting the war, but also with discretionary powers to conclude a treaty with Tipu.<sup>5</sup>

It was at this time (February, 1783) that Macartney took the much criticised step of empowering Sambaji, a servant of the raja of Tanjore, to sound persons enjoying Tipu's confidence as to the sultan's inclinations towards peace, to try to procure some alleviation of the distress of the English prisoners, and to see if the separation of the Mysoreans from the French connection was possible.<sup>6</sup>

The Madras government informing Bengal of the step which they had taken prayed for

<sup>5</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

<sup>6</sup> Instructions to Sambaji—Madras Select Committee Consultation, 12th Feb., 1783, Vol. 20, p. 672.

powers to treat with Tipu on the terms of the Treaty of Salbai concluded some months ago with the Marathas. The ninth article of that treaty provided that the Marathas would assist the English in compelling Haidar Ali to evacuate the Carnatic, within six months of the completion of the treaty, and that both Haidar and the English should release all prisoners that they had taken in the war. The Madras government asked whether, in case it was not possible to stipulate for an entire evacuation of the Carnatic, they should allow Tipu to retain certain small posts and districts of little value.<sup>7</sup>

The governor general and council replied by a shower of reproaches.<sup>8</sup> Indeed the moment was in one respect a wrong one for overtures from the side of the Company. Haidar Ali had died in December, 1782, and the English attack on Mysore from the west kept Tipu engaged in Malabar. Macartney argued that Tipu's difficulties might make him willing to come to terms. But the interests of Tipu to conclude a peace could not be an argument for thus approaching him with terms. Besides the manner in which negotiations were

<sup>7</sup> Madras to Bengal, 18th Feb., 1783, Beng. Sec. Cons., 11th March, 1783, Vol. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Bengal to Madras, 11th March, 1783. *Idem*.

sought to be opened with Tipu was certainly not dignified. But the Madras government had no means of sending a regular envoy to Tipu, as the Supreme Council withheld from it the power of negotiation. On the Madras proposal to allow Tipu to retain some posts in the Carnatic, the Supreme Council was most bitter. It should, however, be noted that the proposal found no place in the instructions to Sambaji, and that it was a mere suggestion to their superiors in case a treaty was otherwise impossible. Hastings was furious, and desired the council to pass an order for the suspension of the governor and the select committee of Madras. He denied that there was any urgent necessity for peace, or that there was any order from the Directors, and declared that Madras had infringed the terms of the Maratha treaty. The majority of the council, however, was not ready for such a drastic step.<sup>9</sup>

That there was urgent necessity for peace, it is difficult to deny. The financial position of the Madras government was deplorable. At that time the presidency possessed little territory. Besides the Northern Circars, the Madras government only possessed small

<sup>9</sup> *Idem*, 15th and 20th March, 1783, Vol. 70.

territories round Madras and Cuddalore. These latter, it had leased out to the nawab of Arcot. Moreover, the nawab had agreed to pay 4 lacs of pagodas a year for the protection given to his country by the Company's troops. The total revenues of Madras did not amount to more than 18 or 19 lacs, of which about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lacs depended upon Arcot finances. But the nawab of Arcot was involved in a huge debt which made it difficult for the Company to realise their dues from him, though some of the Company's servants privately benefited from the situation. The nawab had in 1781 assigned the revenues of the Carnatic to the Company for the expenses of the war. But he was trying ~~his~~ best to prevent the Madras government from realising anything. Besides the Supreme Council, lending an ear to the complaints of the nawab, had changed its attitude towards the assignment, and having made an alternative arrangement, had in January, 1783, ordered Madras to restore the Carnatic revenues to him.<sup>10</sup> The only hope of Madras was the arrival of regular assistance from Bengal. But the Bengal finances themselves were far from satisfactory, and much reliance could not be placed by Madras on a government whose

<sup>10</sup> Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, p. 392.

every order they found themselves compelled to defy. The army was several months in arrears, and the presence of the French fleet on the Coromandel coast confronted the distressed government with the gloomy prospect of supplies of grain and provision from Bengal being cut off and the settlement left in the clutches of famine.<sup>11</sup> To add to all these, the dissensions between the civil and military authorities at Madras made the effective prosecution of the war difficult.<sup>12</sup> An early conclusion of the war, therefore, appeared to Madras essential. The Court of Directors was also eager for peace. On the 25th January, 1782, it wrote that "....a safe and speedy peace with all Indian powers is our primary consideration. This must never be forgotten. Nor must any step be taken, but such as shall have a direct tendency to accomplish this desirable object."<sup>13</sup> However much, therefore, we may criticise Macartney's negotiations on the ground of the time and manner of their commencement, it would be difficult to deny the existence of strong palliatives.

\* <sup>11</sup> Macartney's Minute—Madras Select Committee Consultations, 11th Feb., 1783, Vol. 20, pp. 643-47.

<sup>12</sup> Barrow—"Some Account of the Public Life.....of the Earl of Macartney," London, 1807, Vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>13</sup> Despatches to Madras, No. 10, p. 146.

While the presidencies were indulging in mutual recriminations, Sambaji had met Tipu's confidants and had been persuaded by them to visit the sultan, who had assured him that attention would be paid to the English prisoners, and that, provided the English agreed to reasonable terms, he would cut off all connections with the French. He had then returned to Madras accompanied by Tipu's wakil, Sreenewasa Rao.<sup>14</sup>

Lord Macartney met the Mysore agent, but as they could not come to any agreement the latter returned to his master for further instructions.<sup>15</sup> Sreenewasa Rao did not return, and the negotiations were dropped. They were revived by the Madras government when the news of the treaty of Versailles led to the cessation of hostilities between the French and the English in India. The 16th article of that treaty stipulated that the allies of Great Britain and France in India were to be invited to join in the pacification. In accordance with it, the English commissioners who had been sent from Madras to Bussy, the French commander, to settle the peace, invited Tipu to cease

<sup>14</sup> Macartney's Minute—Madras Sel. Com. Cons., 25th Feb., 1783, Vol. 21, p. 934.

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*, 9th March, 1783, Vol. 21, pp. 1085-88.



hostilities and to release all English prisoners in his custody on parole.<sup>16</sup>

The invitation to Tipu to cease hostilities being in accordance with the treaty of Versailles, the consent of the Bengal government was not necessary. But as the cessation of hostilities had to be followed by a treaty, the Madras government renewed its request to Bengal for instructions as to the terms to be proposed. The Supreme Council had declared that in view of the engagement with the Marathas no separate treaty with Tipu was necessary. The Madras government, however, argued that the treaty of Salbai was in many respects incomplete. It said nothing about the conquests made by the English from Mysore, and contained no clause for the reimbursement of the expenses incurred, or compensation for the losses sustained by the Company.<sup>17</sup>

A few days after making this request the Madras government received Tipu's reply to the Commissioners, saying that he had ordered his forces in the Carnatic to cease hostilities, and was sending Appaji Ram and Sreenewasa

<sup>16</sup> Commissioners to Tipu, Cuddalore, 2nd July, 1783, Beng. Sec. Cons., 18th August, 1783, Vol. 75, pp. 511-13.

<sup>17</sup> Madras to Bengal, 11th Aug., 1783. *Idem*, 28th Aug., 1783, Vol. 75, pp. 736 *et. seq.*

Rao to Madras with a list of his demands.<sup>18</sup> Thereupon Madras forwarded a copy of Tipu's letter to Bengal, repeating its request for instructions.<sup>19</sup>

To these urgent applications the Supreme Council replied that the course of events convinced it that its determination to withhold from Madras the power of negotiating with Tipu was thoroughly justified, and declared that "the unwarrantable and disgraceful" management of the negotiations "opens an ample field for censure and reproach." In the opinion of Bengal, the Madras government had allowed Tipu to dictate the terms of the treaty, and to have proposed a cessation of hostilities to Tipu "in conjunction with or through the medium of Mr. Bussy was at once both impolitic and disgraceful...." In view of the ninth article of the treaty of Salbai the governor general and council positively restricted Madras from making any separate treaty with Tipu, and vested it only with powers to treat for a cessation of hostilities and the release of the English prisoners. In order to obtain the release of the prisoners they were

<sup>18</sup> Tipu to Commissioners, 24th July, 1783. *Idem* p. 802.

<sup>19</sup> Madras to Bengal, 15th Aug., 1783. *Idem*, p. 791.

ready to cede to Tipu certain places in the Carnatic.<sup>20</sup>

In its decision to withhold the powers of negotiation from Madras, the Bengal government was actuated by a deep distrust of the subordinate presidency. They feared that "the president and the select committee at Madras would but employ such an authority however specific or restricted as a general license and warrant for whatever conduct they might think proper to pursue . . . ." <sup>21</sup> So long as this remained the attitude of the Supreme Council the working of the Regulating Act was impossible. It is fair, however, to remember that the Act gave the governor general and council very limited powers. Cases could arise in which the Supreme Council would find itself compelled to ratify against its wishes a treaty made by a subordinate presidency. We can, therefore, sympathise with the unwillingness of the controlling presidency to bear the responsibility with which the Act saddled it while it lacked corresponding powers. That this was exactly the problem in the minds of the governor general and his council

<sup>20</sup> Bengal to Madras, 30th Aug., 1783. *Idem*, 4th Sept., 1783, Vol. 76, pp. 19-31.

<sup>21</sup> Minute of the Board. *Idem*, 15th Sept., 1783, Vol. 76, pp. 61-62.

appears when they say : “ Were we disposed to ratify what they might conclude, there will be a sufficient time for it when we know the terms on which they desire to conclude, of which they will of course advise us ; but were we directly to empower them to negotiate, we should ourselves be by implication pledged to ratify their acts or proposed engagements, if they were such as in themselves were not liable to exception ; but it may so happen that we should be thereby embarrassed in a contradictory engagement with the Marathas.. . . . .” <sup>22</sup>

In October, 1783, vakils from Tipu arrived at Madras and submitted the sultan’s proposals. The Madras government felt that it was sufficiently authorised by the instructions of the Directors dated 6th March, 1783, <sup>23</sup> to offer terms on the basis of mutual restitution of places and prisoners. But it requested the governor general and council to consent to a stipulation that in case of the English or of the sultan being at war, no assistance should be afforded by the Company or by Tipu to their respective enemies.<sup>24</sup> About this time the

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>23</sup> Circular to the presidencies from Directors, 4th March, 1783, (approved 6th March), *Hornu Miscellaneous*, Vol. 169, pp. 575-77.

<sup>24</sup> Madras to Bengal, 14th Oct., 1783, *Beng. Sec. Cons.*, 10 Nov., 1783, Vol. 77, pp. 320-25.

governor general received a letter from Tipu expressing his desire of entering into an alliance with the English. The Supreme Council regarded this letter together with the Directors' despatch of the 6th March, 1783, as sufficient for giving up its staunch adherence to the treaty of Salbai, and decided in favour of a separate treaty with Tipu. It expressed its agreement in general with the terms offered to Tipu's vakils, but refused assent to the inclusion of the clause suggested by the Madras government.<sup>25</sup>

The change in the attitude of the Supreme Council towards the question was sudden. Tipu's letter to the governor general, expressing his desire for a treaty with the English had indeed removed one of the main objections to the negotiations. But the Directors' letters, referred to above, contained nothing that was new. It merely drew attention to the 16th article of the treaty of Versailles relating to a general pacification in India, on which the Madras government had already acted to the annoyance of the Supreme Council. Indeed Madras had made the receipt of the letter a plea for offering terms to Tipu's vakils without the consent of the Supreme Council, but the

<sup>25</sup> Bengal to Madras, 14th Nov., 1783. *Idem*, 14th Nov., 1783, Vol. 77, pp. 653-65.

Directors' letter contained no instruction as to terms. The true cause perhaps was that with the prospect before them of a famine in northern India,<sup>26</sup> which had compelled them to prohibit the export of grain from Bengal, the governor general and council did not have much hope of carrying on effectively a war which, dragging on for over three years, had contributed to deplete the Bengal finances. Besides, the reliance of the Supreme Council on the 9th article of the treaty of Salbai to secure a settlement was probably weakening.<sup>27</sup>

The Supreme Council might have, at this time, felt tempted to take the negotiations upon themselves in the same way that it had

<sup>26</sup> Hastings to Major Scott, 15th Oct., 1783. Gloig — "Memoirs of the Life of Warren Hastings," Vol. III, p. 126.

<sup>27</sup> David Anderson, the governor general's agent with Sindhia, expressed the opinion that the Marathas were procrastinating in the matter, and recommended a separate treaty with Tipu. He argued that the claims of the Marathas against Tipu might prevent the Sultan from complying with the Treaty of Salbai, unless some engagement was directly entered into with him.

*Cf.* Anderson to Bengal—Gwalior, 22nd Oct., 1783. Beng. Sec. Cons., 10th Nov., 1783, Vol. 77, pp. 393 *et seq.*

This arriving at the time when the subject was under discussion perhaps influenced the decision. Immediately afterwards, however, information was received at Bengal that Anderson had concluded a separate treaty with Sindhia to enforce compliance on Tipu. (Anderson to Hastings, 28th Oct., 1783. Beng. Sec. Cons., 14th Nov., 1783, Vol. 77, pp. 634-6.) But Nana's opposition to Sindhia impeded any such scheme (Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1912, Vol. II, p. 468).

done in the Maratha war in 1776. But its interference on that occasion had drawn upon it the censure of the Directors. The lesson was not forgotten, and the governor general asked Tipu to negotiate with the government of Fort St. George. It was known at Bengal that a deputation had been sent from Madras to Tipu, and Hastings declared that "a separate negotiation would but embarrass and impede, instead of promoting their object....."<sup>28</sup>

Before receiving the authorisation of Bengal, the Madras government had appointed Messrs. Sadlier and Staunton to proceed to Tipu who was encamped before Mangalore, and to enter into "such agreement for a pacification as shall be agreeable to the preliminary articles of peace concluded in Europe and to the consequent instructions of the Court of Directors."<sup>29</sup> The minute in which the Madras select committee claimed justification for this step was characterised by a poignancy of tone which scarcely fails to arouse sympathy. It bewailed: "our treasury is empty, our credit exhausted, no supply of money from Bengal; .....so little do they attend to us, and so far from helping us,....that within these few

<sup>28</sup> Governor general to Tipu, Beng. Sec. Cons., 14th Nov., 1783, Vol. 77, pp. 648-50.

<sup>29</sup> Commission to Sadlier and Staunton, Mad. Sel. Com. Cons., 31st Oct., 1783, Vol. 27, pp. 4779-80.

months, they have seriously desired us to give up the nabob's assignment of the revenue.... Add to this that there is a famine apprehended in Bengal from whence we draw the greatest part of our supplies of rice and provisions, an embargo on all grains is laid on there, and our stores here are drained almost to the bottom."<sup>30</sup>

How far Tipu violated the truce, how the progress of the commissioners was delayed till the British garrison at Mangalore surrendered to the besiegers, whether the Commissioners were intimidated by the erection of gibbets near their tent doors, or whether they attempted escape by sea,<sup>31</sup> are topics which need not be discussed here. Moreover, though these rumours had troubled Hastings,<sup>32</sup> they were

<sup>30</sup> Minute of Consultation, *idem*, 8th Dec., 1783, Vol. 28. pp. 5303-5305.

<sup>31</sup> "Men's minds were irritable with defeat and the treaty became the object of a host of legends..... There is reason to think that these stories had their origin in the excitable imagination of Brigadier Macleod."

—Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, pp. 288-89.

(Col. Wilks' account of the treatment of the commissioners—  
"Historical sketches of the south of India in an attempt to trace the history of Mysore, etc.")

—London, 1817, Vol. II, pp. 512-13.

Story of the attempted flight of the commissioners.

—Wilks' *op. cit.*, pp. 515-17.

Those desirous of entering into the details may consult Asiatic Journal, Vols. V, VI and VII.)

<sup>32</sup> Hastings had been induced by these reports to suggest to Bengal the expediency of recalling the commissioners, unless they



not points at issue in the subsequent disputes between the presidencies. No objection was made to the terms obtained by the commissioners, and no point was raised that they were derogatory to the prestige of the Company.

Suffice it to say that the Commissioners from Fort St. George entered into a treaty with Tipu at Mangalore on the 11th March, 1784. In accordance with the 10th article of this agreement, the Madras government signed and sealed a copy of the treaty and sent it back to Tipu within the stipulated period of one month. The same article provided that the treaty shall be acknowledged by the governments of Bengal and Bombay as binding upon all the governments of India, and shall be sent back to Tipu in three months. There was no provision in the treaty as to the contingency of its rejection by the governor general and council. The Madras government submitted the treaty to Bengal for ratification.<sup>33</sup>

The Bengal council pointed out various objections to the treaty. They were mostly defects of form. The nawab of the Carnatic

had already executed the treaty. (Governor general to Bengal, 31st March, 1784, Beng. Sec. Cons., 13th April, 1784, Vol. II, pp. 464-65.)

<sup>33</sup> Madras to Bengal, 27th March, 1784, Beng. Sec. Cons., 13th April, 1784, Vol. II, pp. 145-47.

was not expressly mentioned as a party to the treaty, though it was negotiated to secure the peace of his dominions. There was no article to secure the Company or Muhammad Ali against the old claims of Mysore upon Trichinopoly. No reference had been made in the treaty to the Maratha peace. Besides the clause that the English were not to assist the enemies of Tipu, nor make war upon his allies, was a breach of the instructions from Bengal. However, the board did not refuse to acknowledge the treaty "because such acknowledgment is stipulated in the 10th article, because the whole treaty has been acknowledged and confirmed in form by the president and select committee of Fort St. George, and especially because an exercise of a power which this government possesses of disavowing or revoking any treaty not concluded in conformity to their instructions, would in the present instance be productive of the greatest confusion and embarrassment to the Company's affairs."<sup>34</sup> A copy of the treaty was sent to be signed by the governor general, who was then at Lucknow. Fearing that the treaty might not reach Madras in time if it waited for the governor general's signature,

<sup>34</sup> Minute of the Board. *Idem*, 20th April, 1784, Vol. II, pp. 237-43.

the Bengal council sent a copy to Madras acknowledged by itself, and promised that a copy signed by the governor general would be sent as soon as possible.

Though Hastings had no objection to the terms of the treaty, he violently condemned it on account of those defects of form which the Bengal board had pointed out. He appealed to the King and Parliament for the redress of "these unwarrantable acts" of the Madras government "as well in vindication of the powers vested by them in this government as of the faith and honour of the British nation which have been equally violated." At the same time he felt that "the peace is an object too valuable to be rejected, if it can be retained with honour." He, therefore, did not scruple to join in the ratification of the treaty, provided it was accompanied by a clause declaring the nawab Wallajah to be a party to it.<sup>35</sup>

In order to obviate the possible resentment that might be aroused among the Marathas by the absence of any reference to the treaty of Salbai, the governor general wrote to Sindhia acknowledging the peace to have been the effect of that treaty. The need of a

<sup>35</sup> Hastings to Bengal, 1st May, 1784. *Idem*, 13th May, 1784. Vol. II, pp. 427-36.

palliative of this sort, he lamented, "displayed the nakedness of our political system and the imbecility of the first authority by which it is governed;.....".<sup>36</sup> Writing to Scott, Hastings gave full vent to his hatred of Macartney: "What a man is this Lord Macartney! The wit of man could not devise such effectual instruments of a nation's ruin, as this black eagle portends to every land and state over which he casts the shadow of his wings....I yet believe that in spite of peace he will effect the loss of the Carnatic."<sup>37</sup>

In accordance with the wishes of the governor general the Bengal government sent a new copy of the treaty to Madras with a declaration annexed, to the effect that the nawab Wallajah was understood to be virtually included in the treaty, and that his name was implied wherever the term Carnatic Payenghat was used. It directed the Madras government to make "most strenuous endeavours to obtain a formal acknowledgment from Tipu of the understanding we have given to it," and declared that "should you.....either counteract, resist or disobey the orders which we have given you, you will do so at your peril, and be res-

<sup>36</sup> Same to same, 3rd May, 1784. *Idem*, p. 438.

<sup>37</sup> Hastings to Scott, 12th June, 1784. Gleig, *op. cit.*—Vol. III, pp. 186-87.

possible to the nation, to the Company and this government.”<sup>38</sup>

The Madras government sent a lengthy reply to the criticisms which the Supreme Council had made against the treaty on first receiving it. It claimed that its instructions to the commissioners were completely in conformity to those sent from Bengal. The entire evacuation of the Carnatic, and the release of the prisoners, were all that Bengal had desired. “The treaty having provided for both those objects, its conditions and arrangements must therefore be allowed to have been regulated both according to the letter and spirit of your instructions.” Indeed the allies had not been specified. But the general expression “allies” comprehended all the allies. In defence of the omission of the nawab of Arcot’s name, Madras pointed out that in the treaty of 1769 the nawab was not a party; neither was he a party to the treaty of Salbai, though the Carnatic was one of the objects of the treaty. Besides, in the instructions of the 14th November, 1783, “you gave no command, instruction, permission or advice to make the nawab a party to the treaty; you observe that he will of course sign to the treaty, if he be included

<sup>38</sup> Bengal to Madras, 8th June, 1784, Beng. Sec. Cons., 8th June, 1784, Vol. II, pp. 657-60.

in it and approves it; you do not even desire or recommend him to be included in it..... But the nawab is substantially and effectually included in the treaty.....” The Madras government asserted that the commissioners did make the 9th article of the treaty of Salbai the basis of their negotiations; because their very first memorial to Tipu declared among other matters that the English and the Marathas expected in the first instance that the treaty should be fulfilled without any further delay. The Maratha agent at Tipu’s court had therefore the satisfaction of knowing that his constituents were a material part in the negotiations. The Bengal government had remarked that if Tipu had been called upon in August last to declare for peace or the continuation of war, and had the immediate restoration of the prisoners been insisted on as a security for his pacific intentions, an honourable and advantageous peace might have been secured. Madras declared that the fault lay with the supreme government, because “.....your presidency alone could call or allow others to call upon Tipu categorically to declare for peace or war. This presidency ever since 1782 solicited your superintending board for an authority which would enable them to make that call....But you reserved your authority

and lost the opportunity. This presidency was barred from any negotiation of peace or war. Yet the moment the first tho' private advices of the preliminaries of peace in Europe arrived here, we took measures for and had the good fortune to effect a cessation of hostilities with the French.... We demanded the prisoners from Tipu even before the month you mention of August last, but by the fatal reserve of your authority we were confined to the simple declaration to Tipu of ceasing from hostilities whenever he should cease from hostilities on his part and evacuate the Carnatic and restore the prisoners.....not only the month of August, but those of September, October and November had elapsed before we got powers of instructions from you to make peace.... you did not consent to a separate and specific treaty with Tipu notwithstanding our repeated remonstrances on the subject, till the truth and justness of those remonstrances came to you with irresistible conviction.... " 39

\* The new copy of the treaty with the declaratory clause annexed had been sent to Madras early in June, 1784. Towards the end of July, no reply from Madras arriving, anxiety was felt at Bengal for the fate of their orders.

<sup>39</sup> Madras to Bengal, 3rd June, 1784. *Idem*, 22nd June, 1784. Vol. II, pp. 932-62.

Accordingly a person was appointed to proceed to Madras with triplicates of the Bengal orders. The Madras government was informed that James Lucy Dighton was being sent with those documents to deliver them, as the supreme government was apprehensive that the first copies had miscarried.<sup>40</sup> More than the mere delivery of documents was certainly intended by Dighton's appointment. Wheler, on whose proposal the agent was appointed, suggested that in case the treaty with the declaratory clause had not been forwarded to Tipu, he was to inform the supreme government of it; and wait for further instructions.<sup>41</sup> In the instructions that were given to him, he was ordered to transmit to the governor general and council "the fullest and most authentic information in your power relative to the proceedings of the nabob Tipu Sultan and the execution of such stipulations in the late treaty as he is bound to fulfil."<sup>42</sup> When the reply from Madras, refusing to communicate the additional clause to Tipu, arrived, the Supreme Council resolved that "it becomes unnecessary to continue that

<sup>40</sup> Bengal to Madras, 3rd Aug., 1784. *Idem*, 3rd Aug., 1784. Vol. III, pp. 309-10.

<sup>41</sup> Wheler's Minute, *Idem*, 17th July, 1784, Vol. III, pp. 295-96.

<sup>42</sup> Bengal to Dighton, 3rd Aug., 1784. *Idem*, 3rd Aug., 1784. Vol. III, pp. 308-09.



gentleman in the charge committed to him."<sup>43</sup>

The Madras government was afraid that the communication of the declaratory clause would arouse in Tipu strong doubts of the intention of the English to maintain the peace and would give him a pretext for the renewal of hostilities. Macartney declared his willingness to take the risk of suspension by the governor general and council rather than "execute measures which at this minute in his judgement threaten the welfare and safety of the public."<sup>44</sup> The Madras select committee requested the Bengal government to reconsider their order.

The Supreme Council refused to share in the apprehensions felt at Madras as to the consequences of communicating the additional clause to Tipu. It was, however, unwilling to carry the matter further. Hastings' administration was being seriously brought into question, and his position was tottering. Under the circumstances, he had neither the inclination nor the leisure to carry on the contest. The Bengal government ended the dispute by declaring to the subordinate presidency that

<sup>43</sup> Resolution of Board, *Idem*, 2nd Sept., 1784, Vol. III, p. 518.

<sup>44</sup> Macartney's Minute, 15th July, 1784, *Mad. Sel. Com. Cons.*, 15th July, 1784, Vol. 35, pp. 2758-96.

“ your late disobedience to our orders . . . has been at your peril, and that you are responsible for these acts to the Company and the nation.”<sup>45</sup> There is good reason to believe that “ had the governor general possessed confidence in the stability of his own authority, some violent measures might have resulted from these disputes.”

It is not difficult to sympathise with the position of the governor general and his council. The responsibility for the well being of the whole rested upon them. Yet their powers were of such a limited character that in spite of their wishes the Madras government could legally negotiate with the enemy. At the same time it is clear that Hastings was acting with a biased mind,<sup>46</sup> and that the disputes, which had preceded the discussion on the negotiations had made it impossible for him to regard favourably any act of the Madras government. The position in which the subordinate presidency was placed was one of considerable difficulty. There was the question of finance. Indeed, the supreme government had, on the whole, splendidly responded to the demand for money. During the four years

<sup>45</sup> Bengal to Madras, 2nd Sept., 1784, Beng. Sec. Cons., 2nd Sept. 1784, Vol. III, p. 524.

<sup>46</sup> Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, p. 289.

of the war more than 265 lakhs were remitted from Bengal to Madras.<sup>47</sup> But after the death of Coote not a single rupee in treasure was sent. The Madras government was increasingly thrown on the expedient of meeting its liabilities by drawing bills on Bengal, which soon began to sell at a discount of 25 or 30 per cent.<sup>48</sup> The army fell several months into arrears. How grave the situation had really become was demonstrated when, after the peace, the cavalry at Arnee mutinied for want of pay.<sup>49</sup> Under such circumstances to drag on the war was dangerous. Macartney could not get himself to be like Hastings, quite insensible to danger. Besides financial difficulties, Macartney was considerably disheartened by the attitude of the military commanders towards the civil government. General Stuart, pre-occupied with asserting what he considered his rights against the civil authorities, persistently counteracted the orders of the Madras government, and lost the most favourable opportunity of attacking the enemy. In short, there were reasons for Macartney to desire an early termination of the war. If in his anxiety

<sup>47</sup> Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 616. Also cf. Munro—"A Narrative of the Military Operations on the Coromandel Coast," etc, London, 1789, p. 376.

<sup>49</sup> Madras to Bengal, 7th May, 1784. Beng. Sec. Cons., 25th May, 1784, Vol. II, 598-601.

for peace he had placed less reliance than Hastings on the treaty of Salbai for effecting a settlement, events proved that he was right. Some critics of Macartney suggest that if it had not been for the negotiations, Seringapatam might have lain at Col. Fullarton's feet.<sup>50</sup> But it has to be remembered that Fullarton's army, in October, 1783, was twelve months in arrears, and that the manner in which the army subsisted was precarious.<sup>51</sup> It is true that even at such disadvantage he had taken Palghat and Coimbatore. But Seringapatam was yet a hundred miles away, and a single mistake somewhere in penetrating regions whose topography was imperfectly understood, might have deprived the Madras government of their only defence on the southern front.<sup>52</sup> "The execution of Mahomed Ali at Mangalore and the detected conspiracy at Seringapatam" might have "induced Col. Fullarton to infer a disaffection in Tipu's army favourable to the success of his enterprise," but it has to be admitted that "every detected conspiracy instead of weakening has a direct

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Marshman, *History of India*, London, 1867, Vol. 1, p. 409.

<sup>51</sup> Wilks—*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 494.

<sup>52</sup> Minute of the Mad. Select Com., 8th Dec., 1783, Beng. Sec. Cons., 31st Dec., 1783, Vol. 78, p. 879.

tendency to strengthen the hands of a despot ; and exclusively of those two examples, there was certainly no sufficient ground for crediting the existence of defection, sufficient to form the ground of political action.’”<sup>53</sup>

All criticism against the precipitate manner of Macartney's solicitations for peace lose considerably in force, when we reflect that the terms obtained in the treaty of Mangalore were not unreasonable, and were much the same as those obtained by Hastings from the Marathas.<sup>54</sup>

When all these are remembered, it is difficult not to see that there is another side to the picture. If in some respects the course taken by the Madras government is open to criticism, the southern presidency may on the whole be exonerated from blame on the ground that the fault lay in the situation. The Directors thanked Lord Macartney for his part in securing the peace.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Wilks—*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 502.

<sup>54</sup> Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, p. 288.

<sup>55</sup> Directors to Madras, 9th Dec., 1784, para. 107, *Madras Despatches*, No. 11.

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